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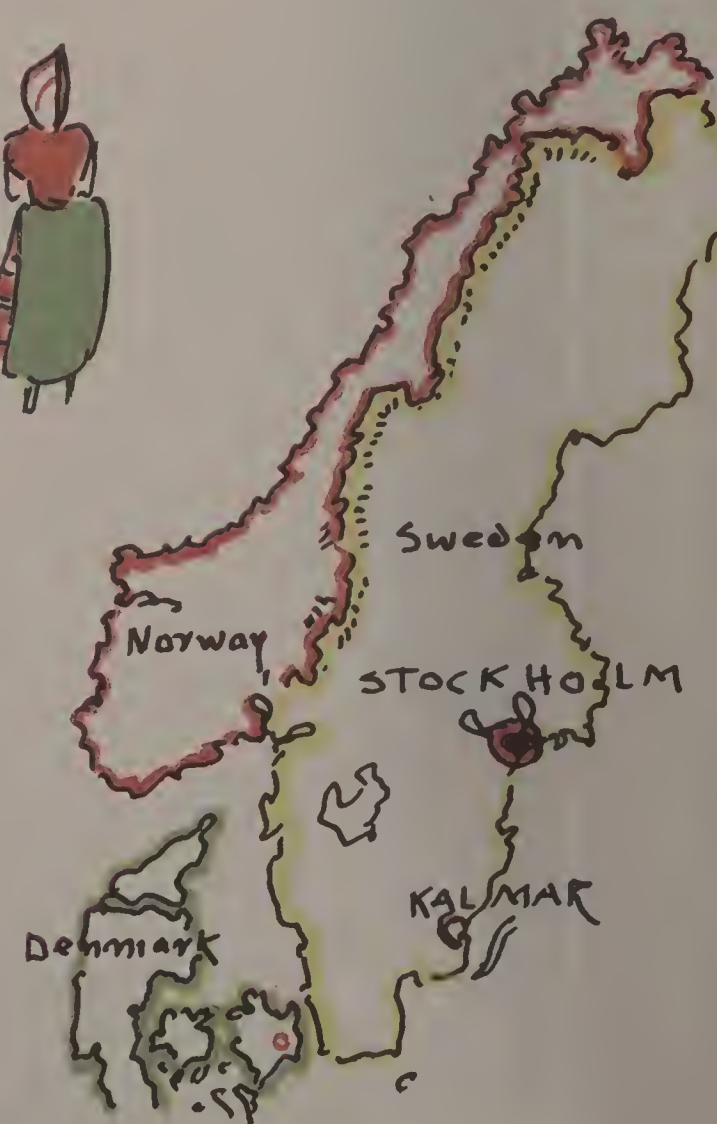
THE - MERRY - MATCHMAKERS.



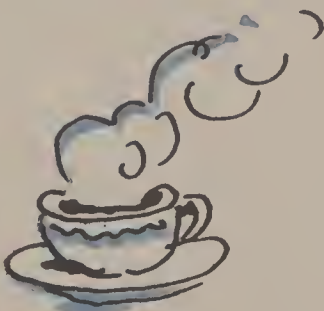
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The Merry Matchmakers





Grand-Mother



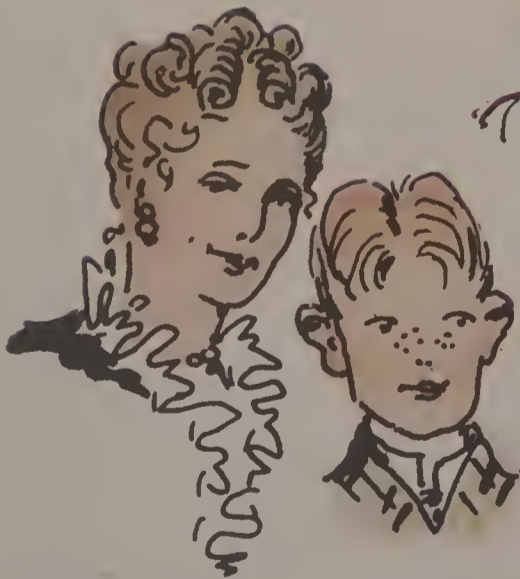
Mrs. & Mr. Johnson



Tillia & Ollie



Peter & his Mother



Aunt Gretchen Marie & Bo



The Guard -

Bugs

The Merry Matchmakers

A STORY OF SWEDEN

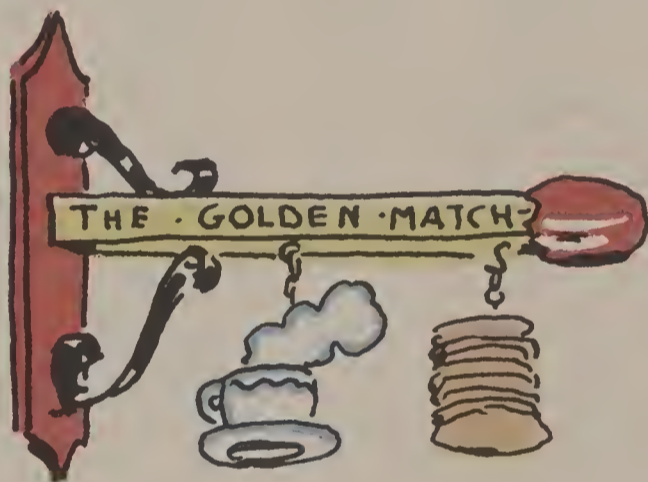
BY

EVA M. KRISTOFFERSEN

Author of

HANS CHRISTIAN OF ELSINORE

CYCLONE GOES A-VIKING, etc.



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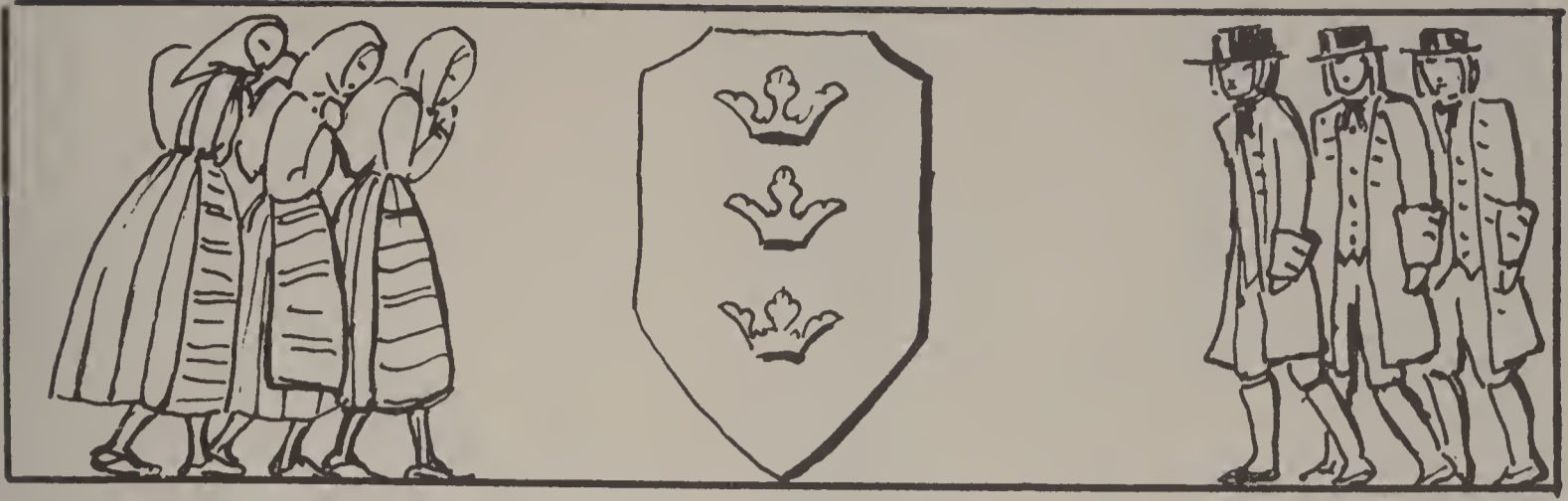
*To
My Great Dane*





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Hedvig Collin

Must be time to get up!



EARLY MIDSUMMER MORNING

LITTLE Tillia Jonsson blinked first one sleepy eye and then the other. Must be time to get up! The fat round musical alarm clock on the table said so. There it began all over: tingaling—ling—ling—g—g. Tillia started to hum the March of the Wooden Soldiers, in rhythm with the tinkling clock. But of a sudden the silvery sounds had stopped, and out of bed jumped Tillia.

She opened the door into the adjoining room. “Ollie,” she called softly, “Ollie!” Not a stir, not a rustle. So the girl tiptoed across the floor and touched her twin brother’s pink cheek with one little finger. “Ollie. Ollie Jonsson! It’s midsummer day, don’t you know? The Maypole—”

“The Maypole?” Quick as an arrow Ollie was out and on his feet. “Where is the Maypole?”

“Sh—h! We must not wake the others. The Maypole is in the woods. Let’s hurry and get dressed and be off.”

“All right,” said Ollie.

Bright daylight shone through the windows, although it was only five o'clock in the morning. For three whole hours the sun had been up, and the birds knew it. They sang with all their might, for they were Swedish birds. Perhaps it was a drop of ancient Viking blood that gave them voices so strong and bold?

“Ready?” winked Tillia.

“Ready,” nodded Ollie.

The two headed straight for the kitchen, but on the threshold they stood stock-still. “But Grr—rrandma!” they burst out in one voice.

“Are you not in bed anymore? It’s early!” Ollie’s eyes were as round as wooden plates.

“Hush,” beamed Grandma, “I am mixing the batter now, so as to have my tower higher than ever.”

The two stepped nearer. They blinked at each other. “Pancakes,” they giggled, “pancakes for breakfast.” Nothing in the world tasted better than the kind of pancakes Grandma could bake.

“Here is a bite for you, or you might starve before breakfast.” Grandma smiled. “If you want to get a Maypole and everything, you will have to scuttle.”

Tillia took a slice of hard Swedish rye bread and broke it into a sky-blue bowl. Ollie broke another slice into an apple-green bowl. Then they poured milk over it and set to it with their spoons. In a few minutes the sky-blue and apple-green bowls were empty.

“Goodbye, Grandma.”

“Goodbye, twins. Give my love to the birch woods.”

“We will, we will,” laughed Ollie and Tillia, as they skipped down the steps of the house, into the fresh morning air.

“Meouw—meouw,” greeted them outside. A black and white kitten rubbed her fur against Ollie’s legs.

“Good morning, Jonas,” cried his master. “Please stay at home. We are in a hurry.”

“Meouw,” answered Jonas and obediently drew back. On the sun-spotted doormat he curled up into a round fluffy ball.

“He looks black and white and dirty, your cat does,” said Tillia severely. “He needs a bath.”

“I s’pose he does,” sighed Ollie.

The two put their best legs forward. Soon they had reached the Market Square. A horse hitched to a cart stood by the curb at their right. Ollie and Tillia nudged each other. “Maybe he will give us a ride?”

A long man with long legs was busy smelling his honeysuckle and jasmine hedge. “My, they are looking fine and they are smelling good,” he chuckled to himself. All over town this man was known as Bugs on the Bushes, or Bugs, for short. He was a gardener by trade.

“Good morning, Bugs. We are going to hunt for leaves and a Maypole.”

The gardener raised his hand in greeting. “Good morning to you! Well, no bugs on the bushes, children,” he rambled, “no bugs this day.” He sounded almost disappointed. “But what I want to ask you is, may we take you to the woods, my horse and I?”

“Oh, Bugs,” cried Tillia delighted, “if you will do that, I’ll share my pancakes with you. Grandma is baking some for breakfast.”

“Pancakes?” grinned Bugs, “hm—m! Let’s shake hands and call it a bargain.”

So Tillia and the gardener shook hands and called it a bargain. Bugs on the Bushes had no wife to bake him pancakes, and he had no children of his own whom he could drive to the woods. But he did have a horse and a cart to take him wherever he wished to go.

The three climbed into the cart. Humpety-dumpety-hump they rumbled over the cobbles of the little Swedish match town of Kalmar. These cobbles had been old before Columbus sailed for America. So now they were very, very old indeed. Soon the Market Square with its stately Town Hall and the even more stately Cathedral were left

behind. Not long after the border of the nearby woods was reached.

Among the silver birches a beehive appeared to swarm. Only there were no bees gathering honey, but boys and girls gathering leaves.

“Hi, everybody! Good midsummer morning to you,” called out the twins and Bugs.

“Hi, Bugs! Hi, Ollie and Tillia Jonsson!” replied a joyful chorus.

“Oh, Petter!” cried Ollie excited, “are you here too?”

“Hold a match under your eyes, and maybe you can see me better,” teased Petter. “How is the family?”

“Very well, thank you,” answered Ollie politely. “Grandma is baking pancakes for breakfast.”

“Pancakes?” grinned Petter, “hm-m! Have you found a fine, tall Maypole yet for your garden, Ollie? See here, I have two. I’ll give you one of them.”

“If you will do that,” rejoiced Ollie, “I’ll share my pancakes with you.”

“That is a bargain, Ollie Jonsson. Shake hands on it.”

So Ollie and his friend shook hands on it. Petter was the youngest matchmaker in the factory where Mr. Jonsson was an engineer.

“Well, are you ready to go home?” called Bugs on the Bushes after awhile. “I’ll be glad to take you, Petter, and as many others as want to hang on. Let’s load her up.”

Petter threw three back somersaults, and then he helped to load her up. Soon the small cart was stuffed to the top with greenery and Maypoles, boys and girls sprinkled in between. Bugs flung a wreath around the horse’s neck and he stuck little branches on each side of the harness.

“Hold on, Ollie-boy. Hold on, Tillia-girl. There—cluck—off she goes.”

With beating hearts and shining eyes they nestled among the fresh green branches. In their hands they clutched flowers and leaves.



In their hands they clutched flowers and leaves

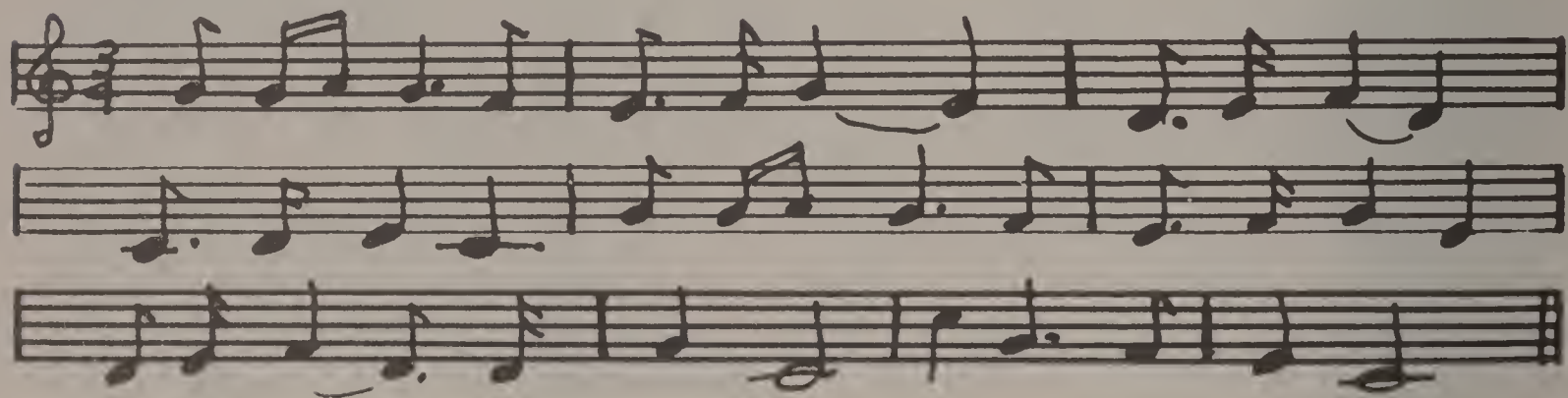
“I am hungry,” exploded Ollie of a sudden.

“I am hungry too,” the cry sprang up. And like wildfire it went from mouth to mouth, “I am hungry, I am hungry too.”

“Ma’s little pigs we’re all of us,” roared Bugs at the top of his lungs.

And Tillia followed up the melody at once, “All of us, all of us—”

A second later the rumble of the wheels was drowned by merry singing voices: “Ma’s little pigs we’re all of us, all of us, and me too, me too, and you too!”



Down an avenue of blooming chestnut trees the midsummer lorry rolled. Overhead, the branches almost met. Like enormous candles thousands of white blossoms pointed heavenward.

Slowly the cart turned into Market Square and then into Long Street, where the Jonssons lived in a frame house, with a dark-shingled roof.

“I smell pancakes,” Tillia sniffed. “Hurry, Bugs. I’ll ask Grandma if she has baked enough pancakes for the whole load of us.”

“Get on, horse,” Bugs clucked with his tongue. “Get on. Maybe Grandma Jonsson needs extra help.”

“Whoa! Whoa!”

At that moment Grandma appeared in the doorway. “There is the party I was waiting for,” said she. “I had so many pancakes I did not know what to do! Please, come in and join us, all of you.”



HOW MATCHES ARE MADE

Nor many days later Ollie and Tillia stood watching a ship come into the harbor. They had stood there for a long time. Big and little boats were dipping across the blue. A steamboat whistled and sailors shouted. But what held their attention most, was a towboat with a long line of barges behind it. The barges were carrying wood. But it was not ordinary wood. It was aspenwood. And the twins knew it.

“It’s going to be matches, every bit of it,” Tillia pointed out wisely.

“Father says that aspenwood is best for making matches,” Ollie added. “He says that some wood is too soft and some too hard and some too rough and some too full of knots, but that aspenwood is just exactly right.”

“U-huh,” nodded Tillia. “Let’s go and meet Father, shall we?”

“Yes, let’s.”

So they turned away from the harbor and walked through the town. At last they had reached the entrance to the grounds of the match factory. A guard with a red-brown beard stepped forward.

“Well, well,” he called out surprised. “If they aren’t the young Jonssons! You have not been around for a long time. What may I do for you, if you please?” His red-brown beard quivered excitedly, as the three shook hands with one another.

“We should like to see Father,” spoke up Tillia.

“That’s what I thought,” smiled the old guard. “Here is your pass to the factory. And here comes Petter to show you up.”

Upon seeing the twins Petter’s face lit up with pleasure. “Good day, good day,” he cried, “glad to be of service to you. I shall never forget the midsummer feast at your house, pancakes and all. Were they good!”

Ollie and Tillia snickered. Each clung tightly to one of Petter’s broad paws.

“Now, who’ll knock?” Petter pointed at the stern dark door to Mr. Jonsson’s office.

“I will.” Tillia knocked timidly. There was no answer from within.

“May I?” ventured Ollie. Tap, tap, tap, hammered the little hollow sounds. But again no answer.

“This is strange,” declared Petter. “I’ll try.” Bang! Bang! Bang!

“Come in!”

Petter shot a proud glance at his companions. “Necessary to make one’s self heard, see?” he muttered, as he shoved the children ahead of himself into the small but airy room. He followed and closed the stern dark door.

“Good evening, Father.”

“Good evening. Ahem.” Mr Jonsson whirled around in his chair. His desk was covered with papers and with pencils. He pulled a watch from his vest pocket. “Extraordinary,” he exclaimed, “time to go home and I have not finished my day’s work yet. And here stand my son and daughter to take their old father home. Well, Petter, give me half an hour, and I shall be ready. Dip the youngsters



Archie Collins

"Here is your pass to the factory"

into the match business meanwhile. After all it is important for them to grow up with matches around them. Understand what I mean?"

"Yes, sir," bowed Petter.

"Good-bye, Father," waved Ollie and Tillia.

As soon as they were out in the hall, Ollie gave Petter's hand a hearty squeeze. "You know what, Petter? You are my friend. I want to be like you."

"By the order of the North Star," exclaimed Petter, he was that surprised. "A general like me?"

Now it was Ollie's turn to be surprised. "Are you a general when you are not making matches?" He had never heard of such a thing. Neither had Tillia. A deep frown appeared on her forehead, as she followed the others down the long hall.

"Well, it's this way," Petter told them. "I am both at the same time, but mostly a general. You see, I am needed everywhere." He threw out his chest. "This morning Mr. Jonsson, your father, said to me, 'Petter, the chief left two minutes ago. He is wanted on the telephone. It is important. Run after him, and use your legs like a couple of drumsticks.' So I did, and everything went fine. And yesterday I helped in the log-peeling room. And the other day I was sent to find our matchboxes with different labels on them, for somebody's collection." He laughed happily. "Yes, I do learn the match business from the bottom up. Still want to be a general like me, Ollie?"

The boy's eyes sparkled. "And how!" he said.

Just then the three entered a room that was filled with machines. Workers in leather aprons were busy at the machines.

"Ever been in here before?" asked Petter.

Tillia shook her head. "No. Father told us visitors were not allowed in here."

Petter looked a bit uneasy. "We had better hurry through then. Of course, neither visitors nor photographers are allowed in the fac-

tory. They might steal the secrets of how Swedish matches are made.” And he added brightly, “But you are not real visitors! You are of the Jonsson family.” He walked a few steps ahead. “Look. This machine with the giant knife blades cuts the wood into exactly the thickness of a match. The chopping machine then cuts those sheets into strips as wide as a match is long. Understand? Further on they are cut into sticks—”

“Like jackstraws,” ventured Ollie, “only, they are all as short as matches.”

“Right,” smiled Petter, continuing with his story of how matches are made. “The sticks are fed into those big holders over there.”

“They look like scrubbing brushes,” giggled Tillia.

Petter nodded and went on. “This long, long chain of holders slides along a great many rollers. And then one end of the sticks is dipped into something that makes a match burn, whenever you strike it on the side of the box. You know, don’t you, that all Swedish matches are safety matches? The boxes are filled by this machine here.” Petter paused to examine it more closely. “Well, that should be about enough for today,” he concluded. “Let’s stroll back to the office.”

“You certainly know much about matches.” Both Ollie and Tillia sighed.

“I know much, much more about them,” bragged Petter, encouraged. “I have read all the books on matches in the library. Listen to this: The Swedish Match Company has branch offices in about forty foreign countries. Two persons out of every three in the world use Swedish safety matches. And imagine, one matchmaking machine can turn out forty thousand filled boxes in one hour.”

“Oh, Petter! Please excuse me,” Tillia groaned. “It is swimming in my head. These numbers are dreadful. I have forgotten every one.”

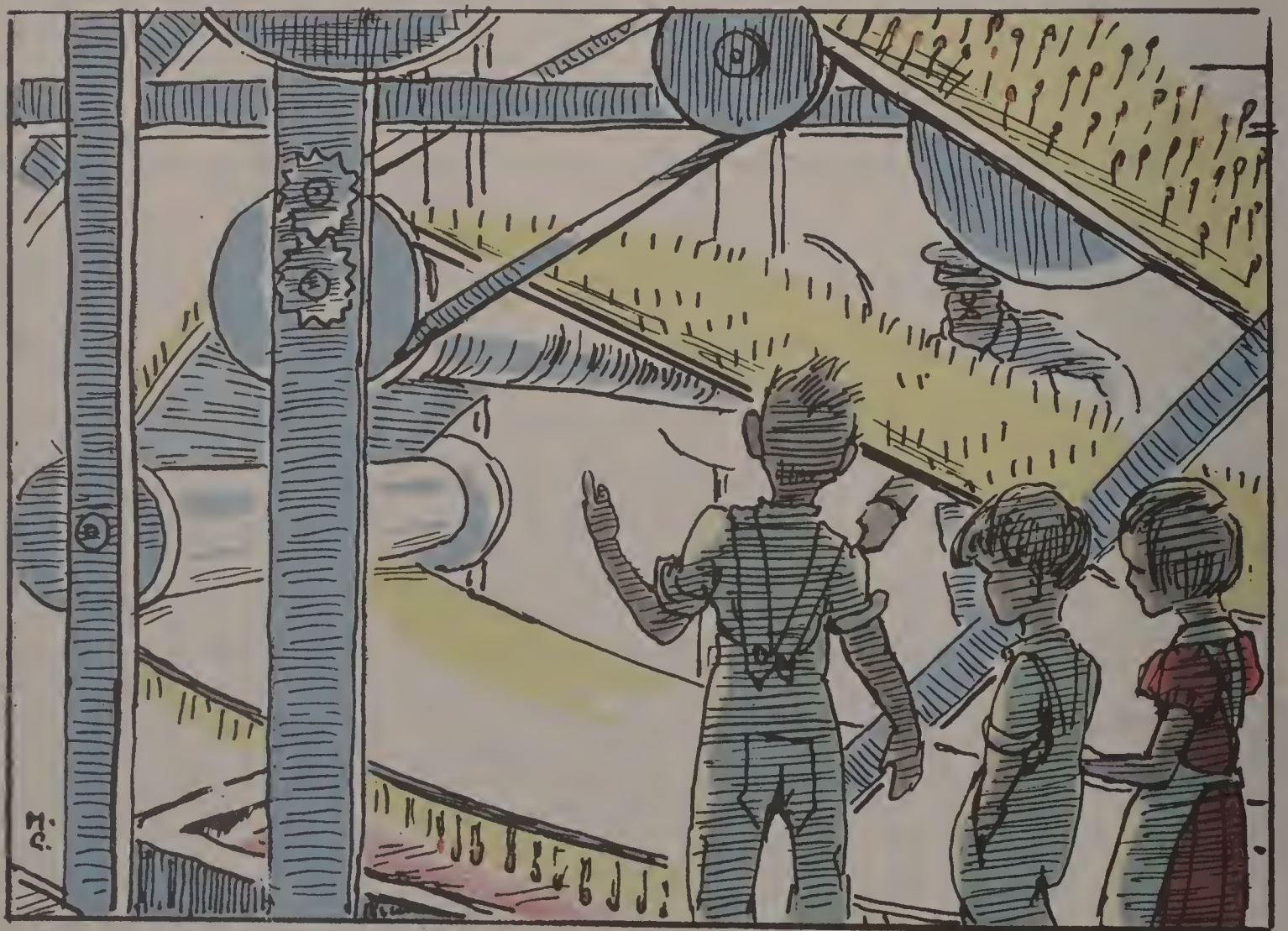
“I too,” and Ollie wondered why it was so easy to forget big numbers.

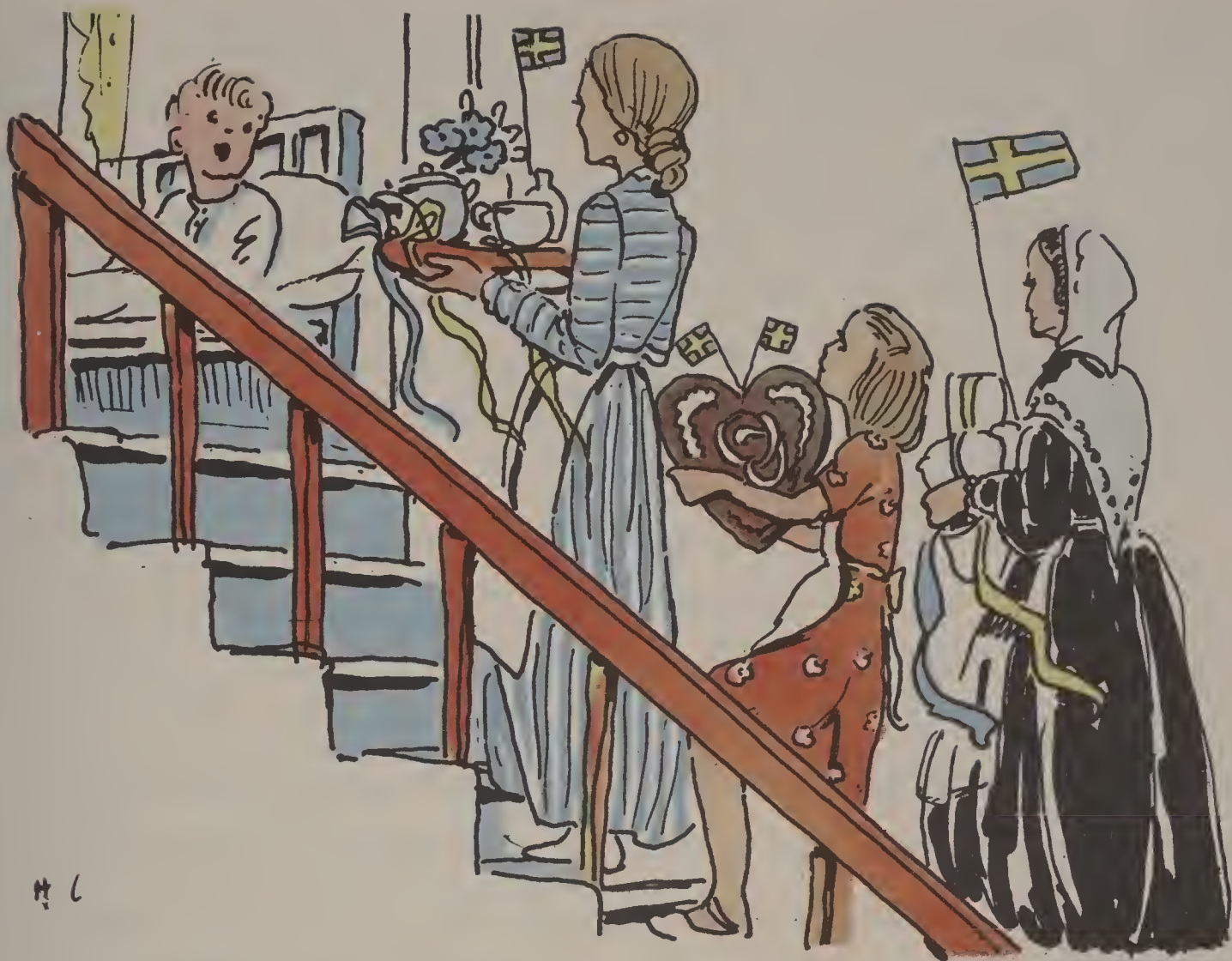
“Never mind,” Petter said soothingly. “Some day you might think of what I told you, anyway. A tiny bit of it might stick in your heads, for the story of matches is a wonder. To the farthest ends of the earth they are sent. Strange people strike them in strange cities. A tiny flame, a puff, a glow—then it’s gone and a new one must be used.” Petter had grown very serious. “But one thing you must always remember: Never, never light a match in play or carelessly throw it away! A single match may set the world afire—”

At this moment Mr. Jonsson stepped out of his office, ready to go home. It was clear that he had heard the final words of Petter’s talk, for his eyes roamed over the puzzled, solemn faces of his children.

“Extraordinary. It is what I was thinking of myself,” he said. “A single match—” He broke off and turned to leave. “Well, Petter, I do not doubt but that you have given them a good dose of the business. Good evening, and thank you.”

“Good evening, sir,” bowed Petter politely, “thank you, sir.”





AN EVENING AT HOME

OLLIE was pondering how nice it was to have had breakfast in bed. It had only been this morning that Mother and Father and Grandma and Tillia had served him his breakfast in bed, from the holiday-Viking-ship tray. And it had not been because he was sick, oh no; but because it was July 29th and his name day. The Viking-ship tray had been laden with cakes and buns and pretzels and with gingerbread pigs and little dishes of jams and jellies. Yes, it was wonderful to have a fuss made over one's self. And it was fun that his name day came in July and Tillia's in March and their birthday in January.

But now it was evening and his name day almost gone. A soft clatter as from the clearing away of dishes, sounded from the kitchen. Ollie and his father were alone in the room, but Mr. Jonsson never said a word. He was sitting in the old pearwood chair by the window, reading his paper and puffing from his bulldog pipe like a locomotive.

Ollie opened the piano. He struck the very highest note, in the right hand corner—*pinggg*—and then he moved slowly downward.

“It sounds like a music box,” he mused, “almost like the wooden soldiers marching in Tillia’s alarm clock. Almost, but not quite.”

He raised his head, and his eyes fell upon the picture on the wall above the piano. There sat the little girl in her ruffled party frock. Her hands rested on the keys of a piano. And underneath the picture a little verse was printed:

“I can’t play,
I can’t sing,
But I can try
Like anything.”

Ollie jerked up his shoulders. He, too, could try like anything, indeed! Down; down, down the scales his fingers lumbered, “Boom—boom—boom,” until they had reached the last and lowest note. Ollie put his foot on the pedal. “Zzzum-mmm-mmm,” the tune sang, and then it was struck again, and again, “Zzzum-mmm-mmm-m.”

“Mercy, child,” interrupted Grandma’s voice, “one might think a bunch of airplanes had been let loose right here in this room. Your poor father! But he seems to be enjoying himself.” Grandma laughed softly.

As if he had been pricked by a bee, Ollie jumped up from his bench. “Please, Grandma, play to us,” he begged, “please, do.” He felt very hot; no, it was cold, and now hot again.

“Gladly,” agreed Grandma. “I will play you a song.”

In an instant the whole family had gathered around the piano. Grandma struck the chords of the national hymn, “Thou ancient, thou breezy, thou mountainous North—” And the clear, high singing voices were almost drowned in Mr. Jonsson’s solitary roaring bass. When the final tune had rung out, Grandma lightly closed the piano.

“Thank you, Grandma,” said all the Jonssons.

“Thank you for singing for me,” twinkled Grandma. “Tillia, your voice is growing more and more beautiful,” she told the girl. “Perhaps some day you will be another Jenny Lind, the Swedish nightingale? Who knows?”

“I, a Swedish nightingale?” Tillia wondered. Her eyes began to glint at the very thought of it. For a moment she stood quite still. “A Swedish nightingale,” she whispered in a low, thrilled voice. “A singer, I! I wish it could come true.”

Meanwhile the family had grouped themselves around the birch-wood table, each with something to do. Tillia started winding up a woolly ball, while Ollie held the yarn for her. Mrs. Jonsson was weaving fancy apron strings on a little handloom. And Grandma made her knitting needles fly. She was knitting a pair of mittens with two thumbs, so that they might be turned for longer wear. They were for herself.

Mr. Jonsson busied himself by dabbling in water colors, for he loved to paint. “You know,” he said, casting swift glances at his wife, “your hair was much lighter, when we first met. It was the yellowest, goldenest hair I had ever seen. Extraordinary.”

“Was it?” smiled Mrs. Jonsson. “That must have been because I was very young when we first met.”

“Mother,” cried Tillia excited, “where did you first meet? Please, please, tell us.”

“Perhaps Father will tell you,” suggested Mrs. Jonsson. “I am a bit tired and should prefer to be a listener instead.”

Mr. Jonsson looked up startled. “So you are tired,” he repeated sadly. “Do you know what is the matter? I think you need a vacation, a real, long vacation.” He spread the bristles of his paintbrush flat and flatter on the paper, in a thoughtful manner. “If only we could lay a few extra pennies aside now and then, we would leave the old home town next summer for a spell.”

Before anyone had time to put in a word, Mr. Jonsson changed his talk and rushed on. "But here is the answer to your question, Tilia. Your mother and I first met in the lumber country, up north."

Grandma nodded and smiled as if she knew all about it.

Mr. Jonsson chuckled. "Do I ever remember that jam of logs! Imagine, twins, your mother and I were watching a jam of a million logs. It was marvellous. Those poor frightened logs fought like a herd of wild animals. How the loggers went after them with their poles, to restore peace and order!"

"Yes, it was a thrilling experience," Mrs. Jonsson agreed, "and I should not mind going back there some time."

All this while Ollie had done some deep thinking. Now he could hold on no longer. "Does a general earn much money, Father?" he asked, with his heart in his throat.

"A general, Ollie?" Mr. Jonsson lifted his brows. "A general in the army you mean, son?"

"No," Ollie hastened to correct himself, "in the match factory. A general like Petter. You see, I want to be like him. And maybe, I could start tomorrow and earn money for—for a vacation?" He swallowed hard, fixing his gaze on his father.

"Oh, you gallant little knight," cried Mrs. Jonsson, and her chin quivered.

But Mr. Jonsson shook his head. "This is a fine idea, my boy. I am pleased. Very pleased. But I must tell you that the law will not have very young ones working in the factory."

"Petter is young! He isn't a grown-up, is he?" ventured Ollie, excited.

"Not exactly perhaps. Still, he is fourteen, and that is older than you are. But pluck up your courage, young man. The years have a way of racing by with seven-mile boots on their feet. I shall keep your plans for the future in mind. All right, Ollie?"

A small whispered yes was all that Ollie could muster. The future



Tillia started winding up a woolly ball

was entirely too far away, in spite of the years that had seven-mile boots on their feet.

Tillia had been wriggling on her chair for at least ten minutes, wanting to talk. "Maybe I could sing," she now burst out, "and Bugs could accompany me on his accordion? And they could pay for listening, maybe?"

"I wonder who 'they' are, Tillia?" Mrs. Jonsson sounded doubtful. She rolled her strip of weaving together, for bedtime had arrived. "You make me think of the organ grinders walking up and down the streets, up and down and down and up. But that is not how you meant it, Tillia. You must tell us more about it another day. Look at Grandma! Even she seems to be having something up her sleeve."

"She certainly has," chuckled Grandma in great glee. "We will have a secret meeting one of these days, the twins and I. Good night, everybody."

"Goodnight—"

"Tr—rr—"

They stopped short, for the doorbell had rung. Uncannily it jangled through the house.

Mr. Jonsson hurried down the steps. In a second he was back, waving a telegram. He tore it open and read aloud:

ARRIVE IN KALMAR SATURDAY NOON WITH MY ADOPTED SON

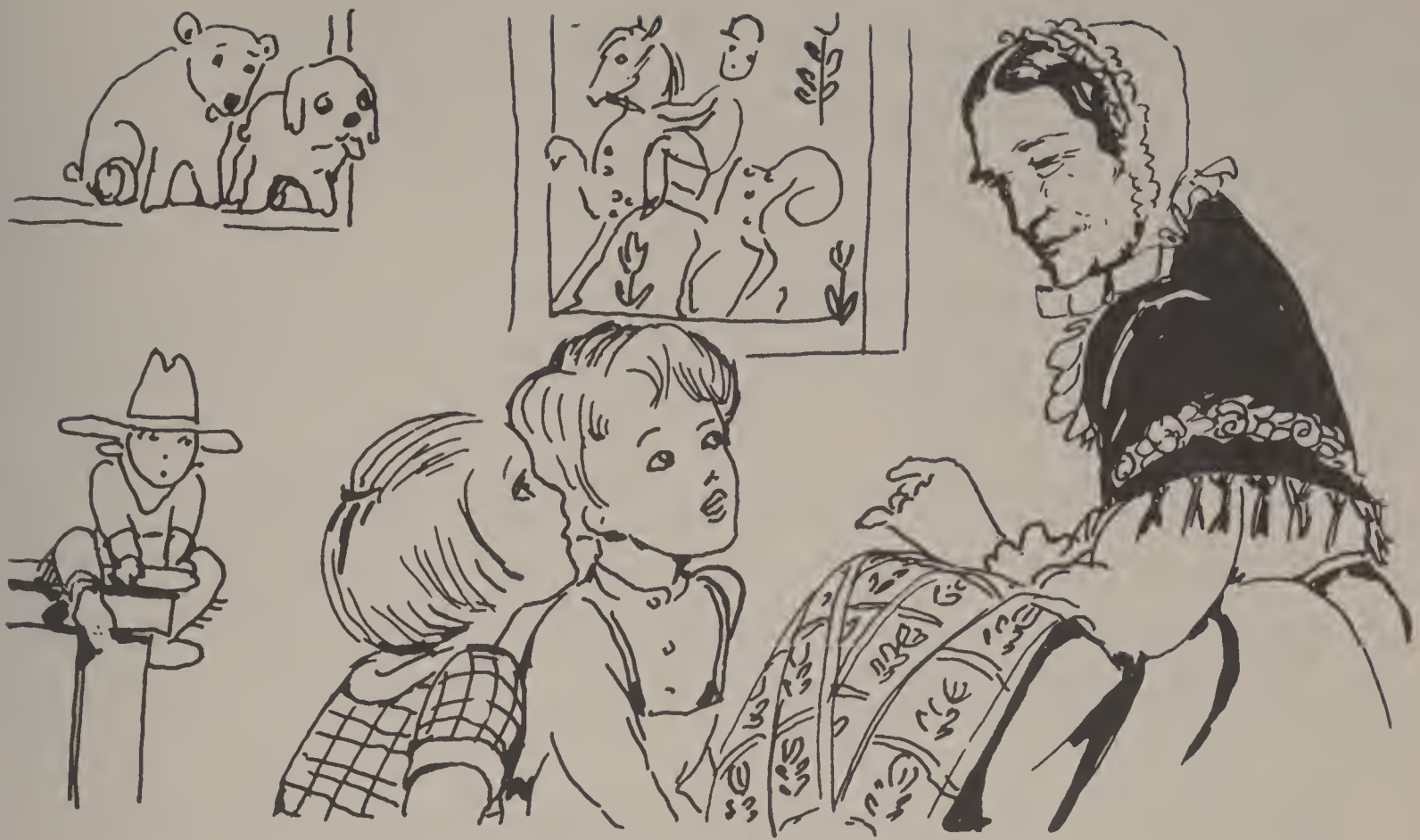
GRETA MARIE

Of a sudden the room was filled with loud and cheery exclamations:

"Aunt Greta Marie from Stockholm!"

"She has adopted a boy. Oh, dear, what next?"

"But she'll be welcome, very welcome!"



A SECRET MEETING

THE next few days passed slowly, very slowly. Had they a lump of lead tied to their heels? Ollie and Tillia had a mind to believe it. Tuesday—Wednesday—Thursday. And all the while two things hung in the air like huge questions to be solved. One of them was Aunt Greta Marie's visit with her adopted son. And the other one concerned the secret meeting which Grandma had promised the twins.

When Friday came around, they thought they could not wait much longer. So early in the afternoon they pulled Grandma by her embroidered apron strings. They pulled and pulled her into the farthest corner of their large playroom. The pictures on the walls stared at them in surprise, and so did the toys on the shelves, and even the books.

"Grandma," whispered Tillia, "couldn't you please arrange for our secret meeting today?"

"Then we would know about it before they come," added Ollie eagerly. "You know whom I mean."

"Hm," blinked Grandma, "hm." The sun was dancing on her silky white hair. "Shouldn't we wait until they have left again?"

"Oh, no!" cried Ollie and Tillia in dismay. "Perhaps they will stay until next year?"

Grandma fixed her glance on the daffodil-colored curtains of the room. "So you think that to call a meeting today is very important?"

"Very."

"That settles it. Your mother will be gone shopping for awhile this afternoon. Come to my room at three o'clock sharp. But remember, that what I have in mind is only a plan, and I shall need your help from beginning to end. Even then we might not be able to make it work."

"No?" Ollie shook his head, round-eyed and round-mouthed.

"No," said Grandma, "I warn you. It all depends, it all depends, on all of us! And now I must hurry and cook my applesauce." She slipped through a crack of the broad sliding door that led into the family's living room.

The twins skipped out of the other door, into the hall.

"What shall we do until it's three o'clock?" asked Ollie.

"See if Bugs on the Bushes is at home," replied Tillia promptly. So they took each other's hands and marched down Long Street.

"You know, if Grandma's plan does not work, I'll earn vacation money anyway," Tillia said to Ollie.

"How?" Ollie could not imagine how.

"I can be a saleslady. I'll weave baskets and put flowers into them and sell them," explained Tillia. "Or I'll catch crayfish and sell them, or I'll bake cookies and sell them."

"Who will buy them?" asked Ollie astonished.

"Oh, somebody." Tillia scowled. "Anybody. Most everybody."

But Ollie had grave doubts. "If I cannot be a general until I am as big as Petter, you cannot be a saleslady until you are as big as Petter. See?" This sounded sensible indeed, but not to Tillia.



Jedvig Collin

So they marched down Long Street

“Maybe I can be one anyway,” she reasoned. “I am a girl, and you are a boy. You are not as tall as I am either. You are fat.”

This was too much for Ollie. “Mother says I am not fat,” he cried. “She says I am round and only an inch shorter than you are. Wait until I have grown as tall as—as a Maypole.”

“Ha—ha—ha—ha!” Tillia shook with laughter, and Ollie could not help but join her.

“Ha—ha—ha, it does a body good to hear so hearty a laugh,” sounded a voice from behind the honeysuckle and jasmine hedge.

“Good day to you, Bugs,” shouted the children. “May we stay with you until almost three o’clock, please?”

“Mighty glad to have you,” invited Bugs on the Bushes. “Let’s have a chat, the three of us. Here are half a dozen chairs to sit on. And I will light a pipe, if you don’t mind. Make yourselves comfortable, young friends. These are plain but sturdy chairs. They’ll not break down from under you, not if you weighed three hundred pounds.”

Ollie and Tillia each thumped on to one of the sturdy chairs.

“You see, they are my inheritance from my father,” Bugs declared. “I have ten times as many stored away in the attic, and tables too.”

“Did you have so many children at your house?” asked Ollie.

“Beg pardon? Many children? I am afraid I do not understand.”

“He means children to sit on those chairs, don’t you, Ollie?” Tillia knew her brother. Ollie nodded his head.

A huge smile passed over Bugs’ face. “Heaven forbid,” he cried out. “It’s coffeehouse furniture, from a little hotel. My father had a restaurant, and I was brought up in it. But now I am a gardener.”

“Oh,” said Ollie.

“Our aunt is coming tomorrow,” announced Tillia lightly. “She has an adopted son, and they live in Stockholm. Our aunt’s first name is Greta Marie, and her last name is Persson. But we don’t know the name of her adopted son.”

“Adopted?” mumbled Bugs, and his pipe nearly dropped from his mouth.

“The telegram says so,” continued Tillia. “And Mother says that Aunt Greta Marie is her sister, and that she has no husband and that she sings in foreign cities. When I am big I’ll sing in foreign cities too.”

“I won’t,” said Ollie dreamily. “Petter won’t either. A general never sings.”

“Unusual,” concluded Bugs on the Bushes, puzzled. “Quite unusual. But now it’s almost three o’clock.”

The two scrambled to their feet.

“Here, wait a second. Take a few sweet peas to the family. They like them.” With loving care Bugs bent over his flowers and picked the nicest he could see. There were flowers all around him, huge, enormous ones, in all the colors of the rainbow. It was the Swedish summer sun of bright days and of white nights that made them grow so tall and beautiful.

“There you are.”

“Thank you so much, Bugs. Grandma promised to have a secret meeting with us. Good-bye.”

“A funny world this is,” Bugs muttered after the children, as he watched them run across the Market Square.

Out of breath and just as the grandfather clock in the hall struck three times, they knocked at the door to Grandma’s room. A twinkling later they were grouped around the little round mahogany table.

“Here is the cookie jar to keep up our courage. Please, have one.”

“Thank you, Grandma.”

“I should like to show you something rare now,” announced the old lady. She unlocked the glass door of her bookcase and removed from it a volume bound in blue velvet. Three yellow crowns were engraved in the upper right corner. “You cannot imagine how precious this is to me.” Her voice sounded rich and warm.

Ollie and Tillia stuck their noses together as they handled the treasure. They patted the velvet binding and ran a timid finger over the yellow crowns.

“Look inside of it,” urged Grandma. She watched their faces closely. And what she saw was such a mixture of astonishment and wonder that she burst into ripples of laughter.

“P-a-n-c-a-k-e-s,” spelled Ollie under his breath. The fancy letters were painted red and black with gold decorations.

“My Princess’ Recipes,” read Tillia. She turned the pages. Yes, there they were. One recipe after another appeared on the brittle, yellowing sheets, in strange old-fashioned writings. “Are they all of pancakes?” she finally ventured.

“Yes,” replied Grandma, “nothing but pancakes. Put the album aside for awhile, and I shall tell you its history. When my great-great grandmother was young, she spent most of her days at the Swedish king’s palace, for she was First Lady Cook of the royal kitchen. Now, there also lived a little princess at the palace, and my great-great grandmother loved her dearly. By and by this little princess grew up. And imagine, the more she grew up, the more fond she became of eating—pancakes! She wanted them every morning for breakfast and every night for supper. And so the First Lady Cook and the undercooks were kept on their toes hunting far and wide for new and old recipes, that their princess might be pleased.”

“It made her tired to have plain pancakes with syrup every day, didn’t it?” asked Ollie with dancing eyes.

“Yes indeed,” Grandma chuckled. “So this album contains my great-great grandmother’s recipes, as she gathered them for her little princess. You will find them for pancakes baked with apples, raisins, blueberries, cloudberry, with sweet cream or sour cream and with or without everything else under the sun.”

“That’s why you can make such extra good pancakes,” cried Tillia of a sudden.



Hedvig Collins

"My Princess Recipes," read Tillia

“Exactly,” twinkled Grandma. She took a deep breath. “What would you think, if we were to start a little pancake inn, serving pancakes and coffee and nothing else?”

“Where?” asked Ollie.

“How?” asked Tillia.

“That is the trick,” said Grandma, “where and how. It cannot be done overnight, of course. We must first do some thinking and then be very practical. We shall need a large room and brightly painted furniture. And we shall have to invent a name for our inn and paint a signboard. But what we will need most of all is your parents’ permission! Your father is the master of the house, and your mother keeps the home fires burning. Each one of us will have to do his share. And then hurrah for a vacation! What do you say to it?”

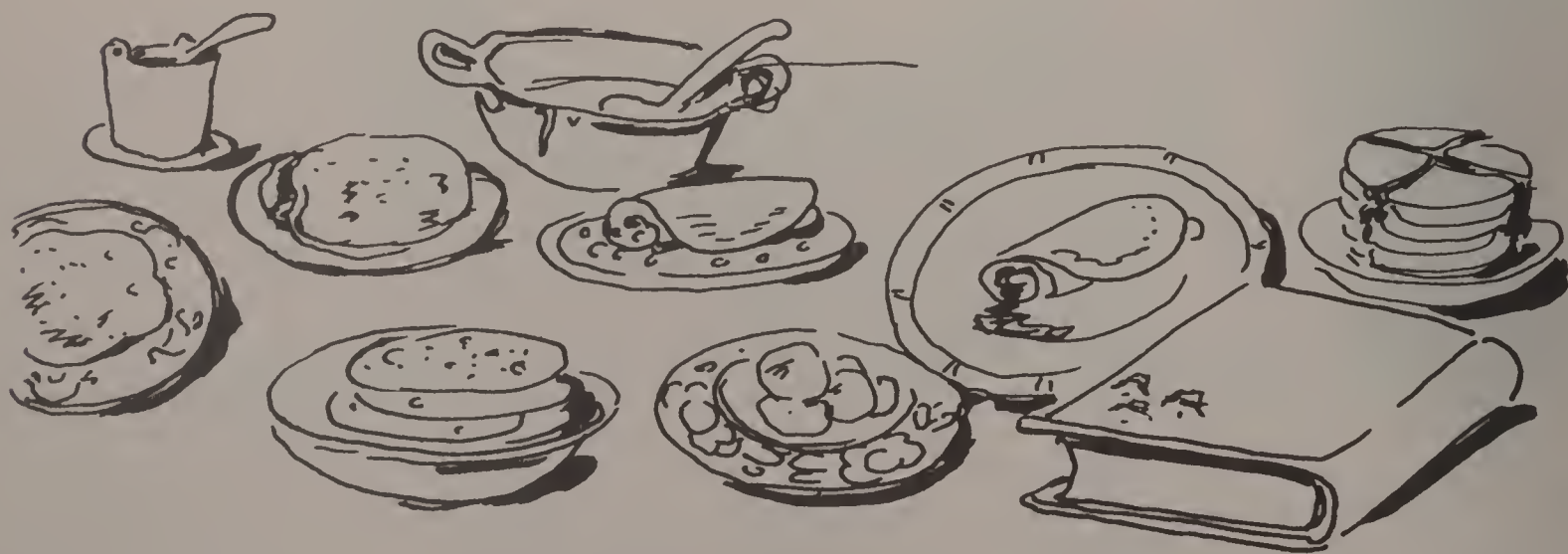
“We say that you are the best Grandma in the world.” The twins were bubbling with excitement.

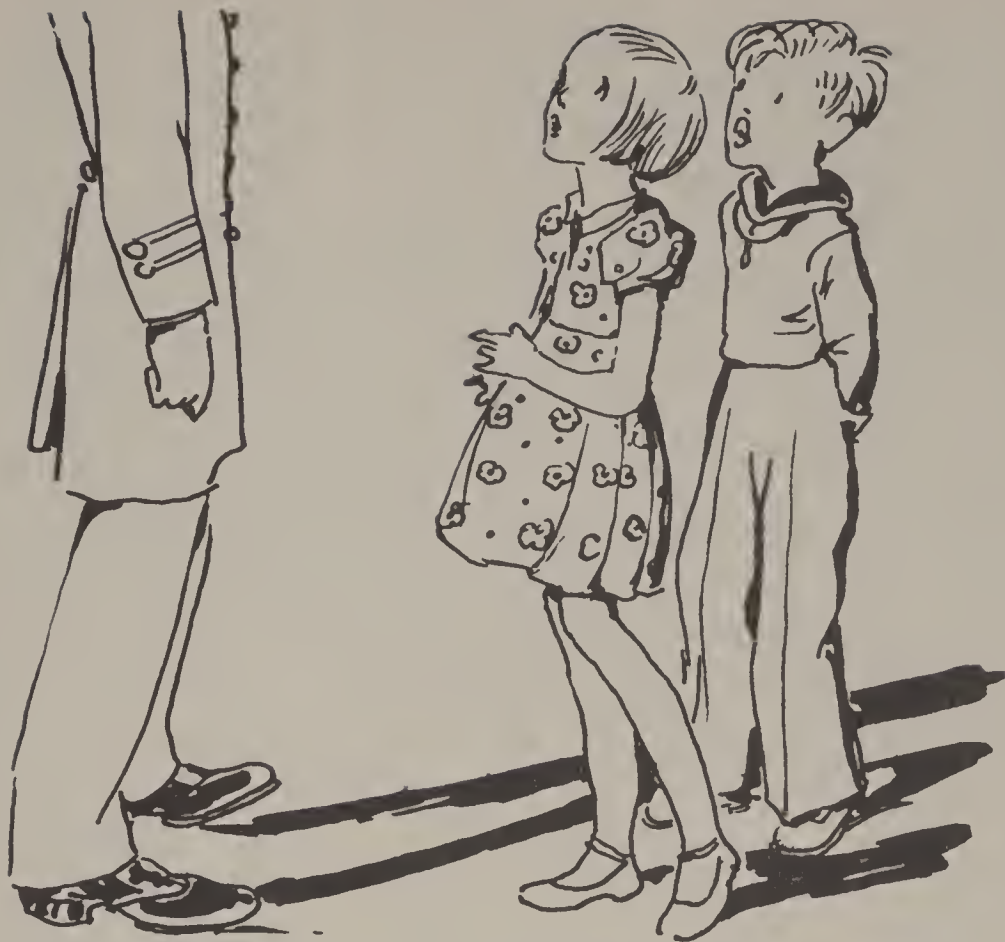
“May we eat as many pancakes as we want to, when we have a pancake inn?” Ollie’s fancy stepped into fairyland.

“Why not? Much work will make you hungry.”

“Oh, Grandma, I am so happy,” cried Tillia. “We will figure it all out for you.”

“That is the spirit,” said the old lady seriously. “I knew that I could count on the two of you. Now have another cookie and then skip along. I hear your mother coming home.”





AUNT GRETA MARIE ARRIVES

AUNT GRETA MARIE and her adopted son were expected to arrive at noon. In their best Sunday clothes Ollie and Tillia stood at the railway station to receive the guests.

“Kalmar,” shouted the conductor, “Kal—mar!”

An official with very bright buttons on his coat strode by.

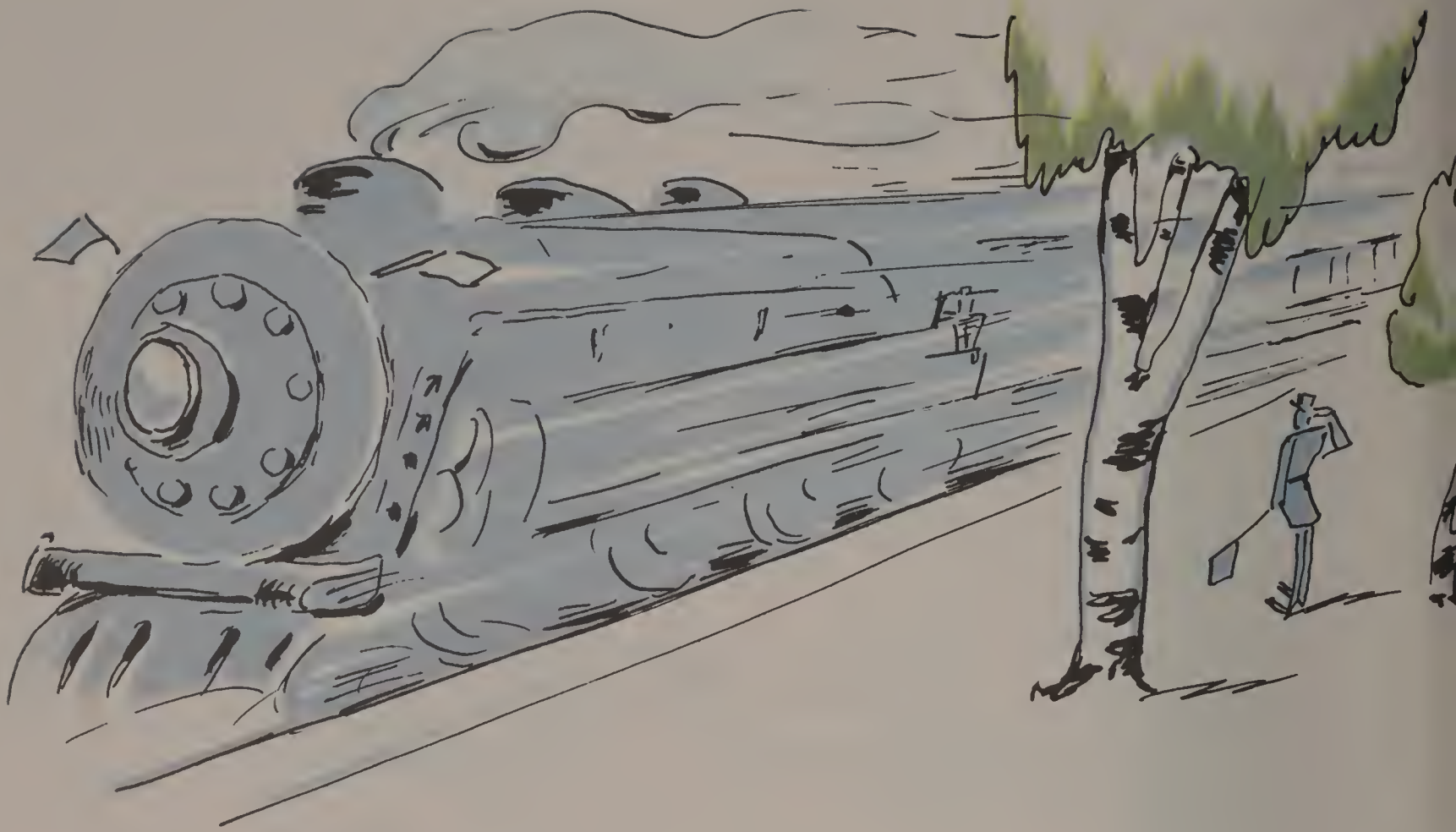
“Please, sir,” Tillia stopped him, “is this the Express from Stockholm?”

“Indeed, young lady,” bowed the official. “The Stockholm Express.”

“Thank you kindly,” curtsied Tillia.

“I counted the buttons down his front,” whispered Ollie. “Ten buttons! Each had a locomotive on it. Did you see it?”

“U—huh,” nodded Tillia absently. She was straining her neck and her eyes to the limit. Where was her aunt? Why did she not hurry a little? The platform grew emptier and emptier of people, and Tillia grew more and more excited. “Ollie,” she grabbed at his hand, “they have not come! We have missed them! What shall we do?”



“Go home. That’s bad.”

“All aboard,” called the conductor, “all aboard.”

The doors went shut. The train pulled out of the station. The twins watched the cars with their yellow crowns on them, slide by, faster and faster.

No aunt and no adopted son!

With wobbly legs and heads bent, they turned to walk home.

“This is dreadful,” wailed Tillia. “Maybe they are lost? Maybe they won’t come at all now?” She felt very much like crying.

“Perhaps they will arrive later, with another train?”

Ollie’s bright idea gave Tillia new hope. “I know what to do! Here is a telephone booth. I will telephone Mother and ask her if we shall wait for the next train.”

Ollie eagerly agreed. “Do you have money to telephone with?”

“I think so.” Tillia stuck her fist deep down into her beaded handbag. Away on the bottom of it she found a small coin. Quickly she stepped into the little blue booth. Ollie watched from the outside



Edvig Collin

Ollie watched from the outside

and listened to what was going on inside. He could see no more of his sister now than her thin legs and a few inches higher up.

“Beg pardon, operator?” sounded Tillia’s muffled voice. “In the wink of an eye, you say? Oh—h. Thank you.”

Ollie bent forward to hear better.

“Is this you, Mother? Mother! They—have—not—come!” Tillia’s voice was choking with tears. “Shall we? What do you say? They are there? How? All right. We’ll come straight home. Good-bye, Mother.” Clunk, and she had hung up the receiver.

“Oh, Ollie, did you ever!” she cried, her flashing eyes facing him, “they arrived before we did. But they did not ride on a train. They flew with an airplane all the way from Stockholm. Let’s hurry home.”

Hair tousled and cheeks aglow, the twins breezed into the family’s living room.

“Oh, I am so sorry, my dears, to have made you wait, plane riders that we are!” And Ollie and Tillia felt themselves swallowed up in a huge embrace. It smelled deliciously of lilacs. Of a sudden they remembered that years ago, Aunt Greta Marie had also smelled of lilacs. It was the perfume she used. “How you have grown!” She threw her hands together. “But come and meet my son. I have not had him very long, you know. He won’t call me Mother, just Auntie.”

A lanky young boy rushed forward and shook hands with the bewildered twins. He was dressed in a checkered suit, a checkered tie and checkered stockings. His eyes were blue and his hair was red. And he might have been about as old as Petter, the young match-maker. “Bo Peter Henning Persson,” he bowed solemnly.

“Isn’t he handsome?” twinkled Aunt Greta Marie. “Well, son, these are your inherited cousins, Ollie and Tillia Jonsson. If you will excuse me, I shall leave you to yourselves for a while, to become acquainted. It sounds hopelessly busy from the kitchen. You may undo the gifts, son,” and the door closed behind her.

Ollie was the first one to speak. He gazed into his brand-new cousin's blue eyes. "Kindly tell us your first name again. I did not understand it. What must we call you, please?"

"Bo!" exclaimed the boy with a loud, clear voice.

The twins moved a step back, for it had sounded much like "boo"

"Bo Peter Henning Persson." He showed his splendid white teeth. "Bo, for short."

For a moment the three regarded one another silently, and then they burst out laughing. With that the ice was broken forever after.

"Please, come into our playroom," invited Tillia. "We'll show you Ollie's matchbox collection. What do you collect?"

"Stones," replied Bo promptly. "Crystal and cat's eye and quartz and amber, and what have you."

Lightly he gripped a plump parcel with his left hand and a slender suitcase with his right hand. "We will open them after awhile," he promised, as he carefully put them into a corner.

"These are my match boxes." With pride Ollie pointed to the rows and rows of match boxes on the shelves. They stood there with their labels to the front, and no two were alike.

"I have four hundred and seventeen boxes now," explained Ollie. "Petter gave those very, very tiny ones to me. I love them best."

"He dusts his collection every day," added Tillia, "and he tries to keep the different countries together."

"It is a marvellous and neat collection," praised Bo, his eyes roaming over the boxes. "You will have to build a glass house for your pets some day."

"I will," said Ollie. "Here is a rocker, Bo. Please, sit down."

"Thanks." He flung himself on to it. Then he put his right foot on his left knee. Ollie and Tillia watched him with shining eyes. He had such grown-up, wonderful ways, this cousin of theirs.

"Ever had the measles?" he asked right now, "being red and itchy all over?"



The twins shook their heads in amazement. "Never."

"I did," said Bo. "Recovered from them lately. If I had not had the measles I would not be sitting here. Lay in the hospital with them, and that's where Auntie found me. She came to sing for us sick boys. And when I was better she took me home with her."

"Where did you live before?" ventured Ollie.

"Not anywhere," replied Bo.

"What?"

"It is this way," Bo explained. "I have no mother, and my father is a rope dancer in a circus."

Ollie and Tillia grabbed at their chairs, or they might have fallen off.

Bo was quick to notice their plight. "Don't worry," he grinned. "He is not in this country any more. He shipped himself to South America."

"Without you?" exploded Tillia.



Hedvig Collins

He put his right foot on his left knee

"Of course. I told you that I would not be sitting here if I had not had the measles. And I would not have had them, if my father had taken me with him to South America."

"Do you like it here?" Tillia knew no longer what to think.

Bo's eyes sparkled. "Do I! Auntie is an angel. She is marvelously good to me." He straightened up two inches taller. "But some day I shall be somebody, and then I'll pay her back for all she is doing for me now. See?"

"How?" asked Ollie. "What will you do when you are big?"

"Do tricks," was the prompt reply. "I want to be a magician."

"Can you do tricks if you want to? Real tricks?" It set the twins' heart a-pattering. Perhaps their newfangled cousin was a magician even at this minute, long before he had grown up?

"Surely, I can do tricks," said Bo, "but not without making a mistake once in awhile. I want to be the best magician in the world, or none! So many people do things by halves." He pursed his lips.

Ollie and Tillia resolved right there and then to study their A B C's more closely, inside out and upside down. Nobody should see fit to count them among the people who did things by halves.

"When I am big, I want to be a singer," Tillia started to boast, and her heart fluttered. "I won't do things by halves either, believe me! Another Swedish nightingale I want to be called."

"How very wonderful!" Bo beamed squarely at her. "Is your voice high or low, if I may ask?"

"High," said Tillia.

"Auntie's is both high and low," mused Bo. "She is directing the Young Girls' Choir in Stockholm, you know. It is famous."

A wild hope shot up from deep within Tillia. If she could ever be one of that choir! But Stockholm was far away, and yes, traveling cost money, and she had none. Besides, belonging to a famous choir might cost money too.

"I do not want to be a nightingale. I want to be a general," Ollie

loudly interrupted his sister's thoughts. "A whole one. Not one by halves. Petter isn't one by halves."

Bo looked very startled. "Beg pardon?"

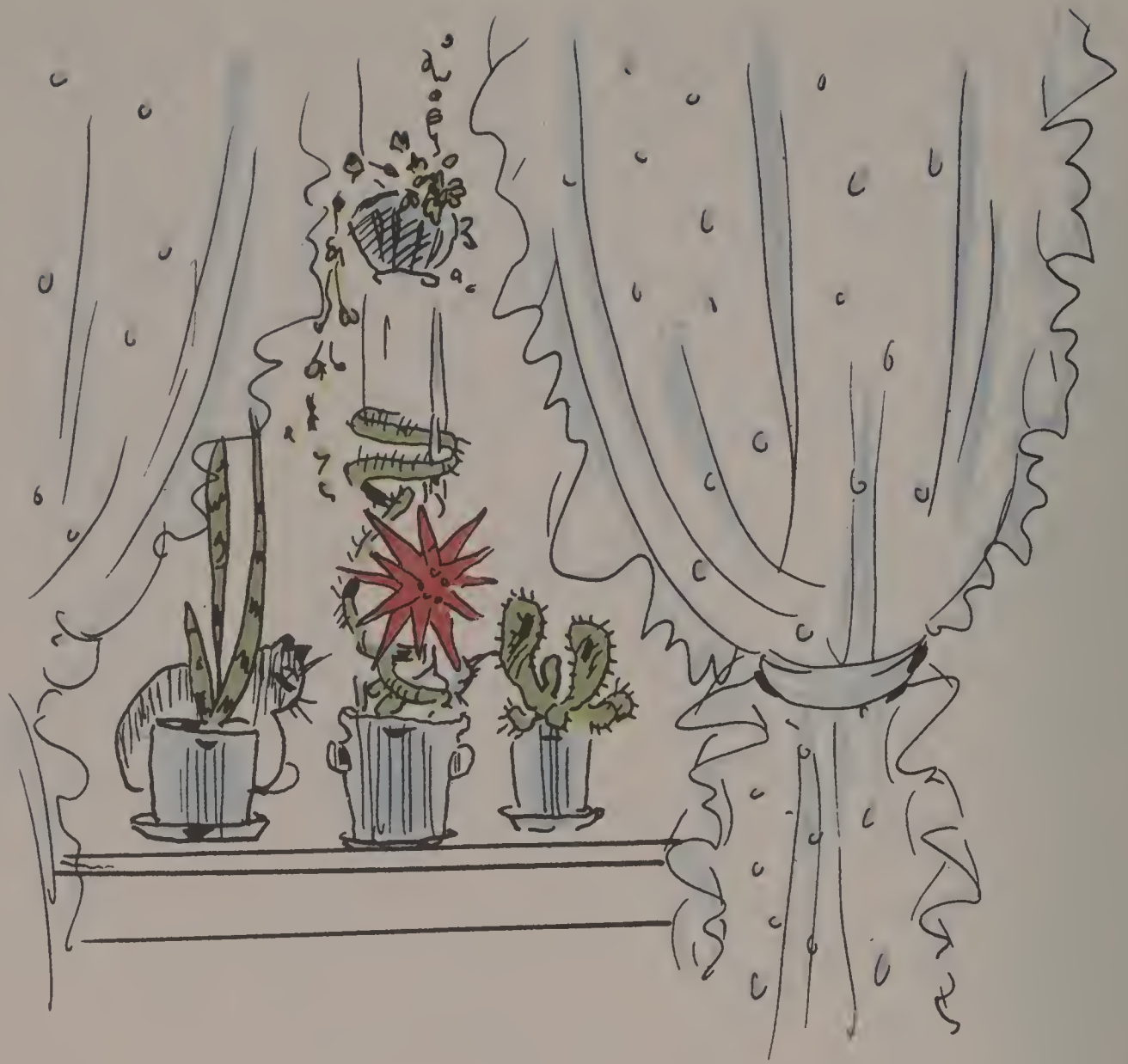
So Ollie explained all over, adding that Petter was the youngest matchmaker, a general, in his father's factory and also that he was his very best friend.

"Oh," said Bo. He understood more clearly. "But let's open the gifts now," he suggested, "the biggest one first." So he began untying and unwrapping the plump parcel in the corner. Ends of string and sheets of paper slipped to the floor. At last a piece of light blue pottery appeared, in the shape of a large vase. Bo set a lid upon the top of it. "A cookie jar," he proudly declared, "the kind that I would call an honest cookie jar. It's two feet tall. I measured it. Like it?"

Without waiting for an answer, Bo unlocked his suitcase. With hasty fingers he pulled out a bit here and a bit there. "All this has come from far-away places where Auntie has been singing," he told his wide-eyed cousins. "Here is a pair of deerskin moccasins from Swedish Lapland. And this is a leather watch chain; and this is a rainbow apron and what else belongs to a costume. Take this, and this. I really cannot say what it is all supposed to be and where it came from. We must ask Auntie. She said each one of you should take the piece you would most want to own. See? But has your father not come home yet? Please, call him and the others, for the taking."

Ollie and Tillia ran into the hall. "Father! Mother! Grandma!"

Meanwhile Bo had sprung to his feet. Restlessly he began pacing the floor, back and forth, back and forth. "I hope this is exactly how Auntie has meant me to do it?" he murmured to himself. "It does not look so well arranged to me—sort of topsy-turvy and confusing!"



A SWEDISH DINNER PARTY

It was noontime of the following day. Aunt Greta Marie sat in the old pearwood chair by the window, sewing a button on to a snowy white shirt. Bo watched her with keen attention.

“My boy,” said Aunt Greta Marie, “if we are going to take the family out to Hagby for dinner, you will just have to wear a white shirt with your blue suit. Besides, it is Sunday today, and you do want to be dressed like a gentleman, don’t you?” She gave him a beaming smile.

Bo beamed back at her. “Certainly, Auntie. I’ll do anything to please you. It’s only—oh, you know how fond I am of my checkered suit and those polka dot shirts. They look so jolly and they do not show dirt—”



"You know how fond I am of my checkered suit"

“Hush, Bo,” broke in Aunt Greta Marie, “here is your shirt with not one button off. Please, finish dressing now. We must be going soon.”

An hour later, five Jonssons and two Perssons sat packed like sardines in a rickety but good-natured taxi cab. On through the streets of Kalmar they sped, leaving the castle park to the left, and the old part of the town to the right. From then on they drove straight south, along the beautiful shore road, by the waters of the Sound. Golden beams of sunlight were dancing on the oak and birch trees.

“Hagby Round Church, ladies and gentlemen,” announced the driver as he slowed down his speed. “Fine old church from ancient times, with loopholes in the walls, for shooting arrows at one!” He chuckled. “There is another round church, a little back. The tower has the form of an onion, point away up high in the air. Want me to stop?”

“We have gone through before,” replied Mr. Jonsson. He turned to his guests. “Would you two care to scramble out?”

“We hardly dare,” laughed Aunt Greta Marie. “We are tucked in so nicely here.”

So the driver sped on again, and in a very short while the woodsy little town of Hagby was reached.

“Scr-r-runch,” said the brakes, as the taxi halted at the entrance to the quaint resort hotel. One after another the Jonssons and the Perssons clambered out and stood themselves up on the sidewalk. The truth is, they almost tumbled out, so great was the pressure from behind.

“Huff,” said Grandma, smoothing her black silk coat and bonnet.

“Puff,” said Aunt Greta Marie and Mr. and Mrs. Jonsson, looking down on themselves.

“Ha-ha-ha,” giggled Ollie and Tillia, poking the pavement with their toes.

Bo pulled at his blue suit, with uneasy fingers.

A uniformed porter rushed forward at this moment. "Any baggage, sir?" he asked stiffly.

"No. A dinner party." Mr. Jonsson motioned the ladies and Bo to follow the porter.

In the dining room things looked very inviting. The window sills were bright with potted plants and flowers in brass and copper containers. Handwoven rugs enriched the walls. The tables were spread with cloths of homespun linen. And lanterns painted with small rosy crayfish, lighted the room. For this was the month of August and crayfish time in Sweden.

At last Aunt Greta Marie had discovered a table in a far corner to suit her fancy. "Remember," she said to the others, "this is Bo's and my party. So please enjoy yourselves hugely!"

"If you don't, we shall weep," teased Bo.

"Never fear," laughed Mrs. Jonsson. "We will prove our Viking appetites to you."

"Fine!" With that Aunt Greta Marie led her party to the long, long Bread and Butter Table, in the center of the dining room. Upon this table were grouped dozens of dishes, containing food for appetizers. There were tomatoes and cucumbers and meatballs and reindeer meat and sausages and fish of all nations and cheeses of many lands and eggs any style. And a cheer for the Swedish mushrooms and many another dainty!

The guests wandered about this long, long Bread and Butter Table, picked out what they wanted, ate it and came back for more.

"See these herrings, Ollie?" snickered Tillia, as she helped herself to the pickled kind. "Here are some with tomato sauce on them, and here with onion slivers."

But Ollie was already walking away from the herrings and to the other end of the table. He was heading straight for the baked mushrooms which simmered on hot plates.

Grandma chose a bit of salmon, and a bit of smoked eel and quite



a few slices of reindeer meat. "I do not have this for my daily fare," she twinkled.

"This cool beer is delicious," exclaimed Mr. Jonsson, as he emptied a glass. Then he ate his sardine on the sweet pumpernickel appetizer.

"And how are you coming along, boys?" Aunt Greta Marie joined Bo and Ollie. Both were busy tackling the cheeses of many lands. In between those cheeses stood six plump red china ladybugs. They were the saltcellars of the long, long Bread and Butter Table. Bo turned one upside down and sprinkled salt on something that resembled a carrot.



Both were busy tackling the cheeses of many lands

"It tastes like a radish," he told Aunt Greta Marie, as if he could read her thoughts. "Try one."

So she did. "You are right," she agreed and poured herself a cup of coffee from the black and white china pot in the shape of a cat.

"This pot looks like Jonas at home," reflected Ollie.

Finished with the appetizers, the party sat down at their table in the corner, to begin with the regular dinner. Bo seated himself at the foot, with Tillia to his right and Ollie to his left.

"When I was in America, no appetizers ever were served with the meals," declared Aunt Greta Marie. "It was a treat to be back in Sweden after some months away."

"Do they eat herrings in America?" asked Ollie curiously.

"Very rarely," laughed his aunt.

"Maybe America is the place for you, Ollie?" suggested Bo.

"Do they make Swedish matches in America?" continued Ollie quite undisturbed. "I do not have a box from America in my collection."

"Indeed, they do," replied Aunt Greta Marie.

"This soup tastes exactly the way my mother used to make it," broke in Mrs. Jonsson. "We called it Carpenter Soup, because of the many coarse vegetables swimming around in it."

"Ah, here come the crayfish," sing-songed Tillia, as the waitress brought seven little bowls on a tray. Each bowl was filled to the rim with the pink dainty.

By and by thin shells and tiny claws were heaped upon each plate, for the more crayfish eaten, the more shells and claws had to be put aside.

"Last year I had my crayfish dinner in the open air restaurant of the Outdoor Museum," said Aunt Greta Marie. "It is a fine place, with Stockholm and the waterways lying far below at your feet. Oh, Ollie," she winked at him, "how would you like to travel to Stockholm some day? I could show you the palace of the Match Company,

with the marble fountain in the courtyard. At the palace they have a great collection of match boxes, including the first box that was ever made in Sweden. All sizes and all kinds are there, with thousands of different labels on them.”

It set Ollie’s heart to dancing in delight. “When I am a general, I’ll save enough money to travel to Stockholm,” he declared. “I might even try to work right there for awhile!”

“Well, well, son,” Mr. Jonsson sounded a gentle warning. “Remember the old saying: Abroad is good, but home is better.”

Ollie bent his head away down over the pink crayfish. He ate and he wondered.

“How I wish I really could become a singer and live in Stockholm,” Tillia whispered to Bo.

“You will, won’t you?” He glanced at her sharply. “If you are very, very fond of something, you must stick to it and work for it until it comes true. You must never, never give up.”

Tillia gazed at her cousin with admiration and said nothing.

So Bo painted the future for her in rosy colors. His food cooled on his plate, but he scarcely noticed it. “You could stay with us, and Auntie could give you singing lessons. And perhaps she would have you belong to her choir, if you are very good. Believe me, it is fun to live in Stockholm with Auntie! She would let me take you to the Outdoor Museum, away up high above the city. It feels so queer to walk about in the park, meeting with strange animals and people—with honest to goodness Lapps, for instance.”

“Aren’t they made of wax?” asked Ollie doubtful.

“Who? The Lapps? Dear me, no.” Bo shook his head. “They are real people, dressed in their native costumes. The cottages and the farms are fixed up exactly as they were in ancient times, inside and out. There is a jolly old fiddler too, Tillia. You could wear your new costume from Auntie, and we could dance! Boys and girls are dancing there the whole summer long. And—”



“Please Bo, be so good and help yourself to the gravy,” interrupted Grandma’s mild voice, “and then pass the boat on.”

“I beg your pardon,” Bo smiled absently, as he lifted the gravy boat with his left hand and the gravy ladle with his right hand. But his eyes he kept on Tillia, and on Tillia only. “We must go to the outdoor theatre together, Tillia—”

“Drip-drip-drip-trickle-trick,” it dripped and dripped.

“Watch out!” cried Ollie and Tillia, but it was too late. Bo’s left hand gave an extra jerk and landed an extra splash on his right trousers leg. Gravy! Gravy! Gravy! Gravy, away down the front of his blue Sunday-suit. A tiny puddle formed on the floor, between his feet.



"Watch out!" cried Ollie and Tilia

“Great Peter!” Hot waves chased up and down Bo’s spine. The next second his far and near neighbors at the table jumped up. And in another second they were busy trying to wipe him with their pretty homespun napkins.

“Never mind, son. Cheer up,” soothed Aunt Greta Marie. “The gravy boats are nasty little things. Their shape is so unhandy.”

Bo hung his head. He was thinking of his checkered suit at home, and how good a suit it was for hiding spots, gravy or no gravy.

“Here comes the waitress now.” Aunt Greta Marie turned to her. “The young gentleman has had a little accident,” she whispered. And aloud she said: “You may clear the table and serve the rosehip jelly with whipping cream, for our dessert. And bring seven pieces of crown cake, if you please.”

And that was the end of the Perssons’ and the Jonssons’ dinner party.





BO CAN DO TRICKS

ANOTHER week rolled by, and Aunt Greta Marie and her adopted son could still be found in Kalmar. It was so easy to get to the place and so difficult to leave it.

Bo had made great friends with Ollie and Petter, and he all but turned into a young matchmaker himself. Almost every morning Petter gave a longdrawn whistle, as he walked by the Jonsson home, on his way to work. For an answer, the two boys would scamper down the stairs and then accompany their friend as far as to the factory.

Mr. and Mrs. Jonsson did not mind it in the least. Whenever they spoke of Petter, their eyes twinkled. "He is planting the roots of the match business deep down into Ollie's heart," they said to each other. "Our boy will grow to be a matchmaker, like his father! It is a pleasure watching him."

And there was Tillia, singing and warbling all day long as nimbly as a bird. Aunt Greta Marie gave her a lesson once in awhile. "You are very young," she earnestly impressed upon the girl. "You may so easily overstrain your lovely voice and spoil it forever. Take care of it!"

"I just must sing, I know not why," came Tillia's answer, in a voice as clear and sweet as silver bells. "It sings inside of me. It will not let me stop."

She was a truly happy soul, this little Tillia Jonsson, or she could not have sung the way she did.

There came a sunny, golden afternoon. As usual, Tillia was sitting at the piano, singing scales, slowly up and down and down and up.

The boys had their noses each in a story book. But their ears half listened to the soft clear notes floating about in the room.

"Bo," called Ollie of a sudden, "do you like pancakes as much as I do?"

Bo raised his head from the story book. "Depends on how much you like them," he said soberly. "I could eat twenty right now. How many could you eat?"

"Twenty-five. Do you like roasted apples too?"

"Why, Ollie, you make me hungry," cried Bo and shut his book with a bang. "Too bad it isn't supper time yet. I think I'll show you a thing or two meanwhile. Do you have a box of matches handy?"

"Who, I?" laughed Tillia. She closed the piano lid and joined the boys. "I will ask Mother for one."

In a minute she returned with a new, filled box.

Bo took eight matches from it. "Half of twelve is—what?" he blinked.



"Half of twelve is—what?" he blinked

“Six,” said Ollie, and “Six,” said Tillia.

Bo shook his head. “It is seven,” he announced, laying out a neat pattern in Roman numerals, like this:



Ollie and Tillia feared they had not heard right.

“It is easy.” With a sweep of his hand, Bo removed the lower half of the letters. “See? Isn’t this a seven? And isn’t it half of the twelve as it first looked?”

The twins’ admiration rose by leaps and bounds. “A trick!” they shouted. “He is doing tricks for us! Please, show us another one.”

Bo was very pleased to do another trick. In a hoarse magician’s voice he started talking to the matchbox, which rested on the top of his hand. “Stand up. I tell you to stand up!” And the box raised itself and stood on end.

The twins shrieked with delight.

“Now hang on that door,” Bo commanded the match box. He set it against the wood and gave it a few strokes. There it hung as though in a holder!

“Who is the stronger of you two?” Bo went on blustering. “You, Ollie?”

“Why?” Of a sudden Ollie had grown suspicious.

This in turn put Bo into a teasing mood. “Oh—h,” he jested, “I might want to fight you with my fists and give you a blue nose!”

“I am not afraid,” flashed Ollie. “My father is a matchmaker, and yours is not. Wait until I am one myself!”

For a moment Bo stared at Ollie as if he had seen a ghost. Then he grinned from ear to ear. “Great Peter, this is too deep for me! A fight and a blue nose—what have they to do with matchmakers? Great, great Peter! Oh—h!”

Ollie was beginning to wonder himself whatever had made him

say such a thing, when Tillia helped him out. "He just is so proud of his father," she eagerly reasoned. "You are, Ollie, aren't you?"

He had barely nodded his head for an answer, when Tillia rushed on: "But I am stronger than he is anyway. Let me try the trick, Bo, please!"

"All right," said Bo. "But give Ollie first chance this time. You may try after him. Clear the table for me, please."

With deft fingers he removed the drawer from the box, emptied it of matches and set the cover on its side. He then placed the drawer on end, upon the side of the cover. "Ho, young fellow," he shouted boisterously, "use your fists and show that you are a man. Smash these things to bits, if you can."

"Bang!" And Ollie's fist landed hard on the table, while the cover and the drawer flew away from his hand, as soon as he had struck them.

"I thought you were not strong enough. It looks easy, but—still want a try, Tillia?"

"U—huh."

So Bo built up his box and drawer once more, and Tillia tried her best to show that the trick was no trick after all. But she did not succeed. What had happened to Ollie's fist, also happened to her own. It merely hit the table, and the box and drawer jumped aside.

The twins gazed at Bo in round-eyed wonder. "How and whenever did you learn to do these tricks?" they marvelled.

"From a book I read, when I had the measles," was the answer. "The measles are not the worst that may come to a fellow. They give you plenty of time to figure out matters." Bo's face took on a far-away look. "When I was in the hospital I used to color matches red and blue and green, and sometimes golden. Golden matches! They were so pretty and fine to do tricks with. Once, when Auntie came to sing for us boys, I gave her a whole box of golden matches, for a keepsake."



“Golden matches?” the words rang and questioned in Ollie’s head. His mind set out to play with them. A golden match—the golden match, golden, golden—

Faster and faster went his thoughts. They almost stumbled over each other. And then of a sudden he knew. The Golden Match must be the name of their pancake inn! Of course, that’s what it must be. And he, Ollie, had invented it!

“I have to see Grandma,” he announced and bounded out of the door. A few minutes later he returned with this message: “Grandma is going to have a meeting before supper, but not a secret one. It is about pancakes. Everybody may listen to it, except Father, because he is working.”



"Grandma is going to have a meeting before supper"

At this moment light footsteps could be heard from the hall, and almost immediately Aunt Greta Marie rushed into the room. Her eyes flashed and her cheeks glowed. She sank upon a chair and rocked with laughter.

Grandma and Mrs. Jonsson entered, at a loss of what to make of such a burst of merriment.

“What is the matter, Auntie?” Bo asked, and laughed too.

“It’s—oh, it is the gymnastics I took,” was her chuckling explanation. “I tell you, they dragged me through the heartiest course of gymnastics I ever experienced.”

“What did they do with you?”

“They hacked my head and they brushed it and they played piano on it. And they pommelled me in just the right places. And then I had to do head-rolling and neck-raising and screw-twisting. But here is the name of the best exercise yet, if I remember it right. It is called Half-wing-half-stride-high-ride-fall-turn-sitting-standing up, or something like it.”

“Are you very tired?” There was great feeling in Mrs. Jonsson’s voice. “It does not sound so good to me the way they overworked on you.”

“But I asked for it,” smiled Aunt Greta Marie. “And it was such fun, such fun!”





ABOUT A PANCAKE INN

GRANDMA was bustling about in a restless fashion. Under her arm she held the blue velvet album, which hid her precious recipes between its covers.

“Yes,” she decided to herself, “I should start the ball rolling.” Still, she turned a doubtful face to Aunt Greta Marie. “I wonder,” she said, “if you would prefer a rest to our before-supper meeting?”

“A meeting, and I resting?” cried Aunt Greta Marie. “Impossible!”

Grandma gave a wistful sigh, and then she began. “The thing is that the twins and I have worked out a plan, but the plan needs your approval. See this album here?” She passed it to Aunt Greta Marie. “Look inside of it, and you will understand why Grandma bakes better pancakes than most people around here”



Oh's and ah's and questioning glances wandered back and forth between Aunt Greta Marie and its owner.

"Some time ago," continued Grandma, "this family thought of something of which other people have thought much and long before them: To take a vacation! In order to earn the necessary money, we should like to open a small pancake inn."

For a whole half-minute it was so still in the room that they all could have heard a pin drop. Then shouts of glee went up.

"A brave and fine idea!" Aunt Greta Marie and Bo clapped their hands. "Think of it, to swim in pancakes, so to speak. Do tell us more about it."

"We'll serve Grandma's Princess' pancakes and coffee," beamed Tillia. "See? Nothing else."



"We should like to open a small pancake inn"

“But where? In what room? Not here in the house?” Mrs. Jonsson felt at a loss, and yet she could not help but enjoy the plan.

Tillia looked blankly at her grandmother. “Wouldn’t the house be all right?” she asked, “maybe here, in the living room?”

Grandma held the girl’s hand. “What about your playroom? It is large and airy and altogether very suitable.”

Tillia bowed her head. A pang shot through her heart. She loved this room of theirs so dearly, even more than Ollie did.

“Don’t tell me now,” whispered Grandma. “Think it over, both of you.”

“What are you going to name your inn?” Bo wanted to know.

Here was Ollie’s chance. Like a jack-in-the-box he jumped from his chair. It seemed to him that he had waited a long time for this question. So now he planted himself in front of his cousin. “Don’t you know what it is going to be called?” he spluttered. “It is going to be called The Golden Match! And you did it. I mean, you made me invent it, because you painted matches golden when you had the measles. See?”

Bo’s face lit up away to the roots of his red hair. “Ollie,” he shouted, “it is great!” In his excitement he slapped Ollie’s shoulder. “Golden pancakes and golden coffee—what a golden match. Isn’t it a glorious name for a pancake inn, Auntie and Grandma?”

“Very proper indeed,” they agreed.

“Such an adventurous idea,” said Aunt Greta Marie. “Shake hands with your old aunt, twins. I promise that Bo and I will be in town on your grand little opening day.”

“Couldn’t you take Mother with you to Stockholm tomorrow?” Tillia burst out, half in earnest, half in fun. “Then we could surprise her with the inn.”

“Did you ever!” cried Aunt Greta Marie. “We are simply popping with ideas. What do you say to it, son? Shall we steal your aunt and keep her with us for awhile?”

“Perhaps she need not be stolen,” replied Bo dryly. “Perhaps she would come without it?”

So Aunt Greta Marie and Bo invited Mrs. Jonsson on the spot to spend a fortnight with them in Stockholm.

“This is too much for a poor woman,” groaned Mrs. Jonsson. “I could not leave this house tomorrow if I wanted to. But thank you just the same.”

“The day after tomorrow, then.” Bo was quick in finding a way out. And bright-eyed he added, “Very well. You will fly with us.” He had decided for her.

Mrs. Jonsson put her hands to her ears. “Come, help me in the kitchen, every one of you,” she laughed, “and no more talk.”

But as they turned to march into the hall, Mr. Jonsson stood in the doorway. No one had heard him.

“How do you do,” he called out pleasantly. “And what is this mirth about, may I ask?”

“The young ones will tell you,” advised Grandma. “We are late with our supper and must hustle, if you will excuse us.”

So Mr. Jonsson made himself comfortable in the grandfather chair, and Ollie, Bo and Tillia climbed all over him. They laughed and they chatted and made a jolly time of it.

And all that Mr. Jonsson did, was to listen. He was a splendid listener. He only spoke when he was spoken to.

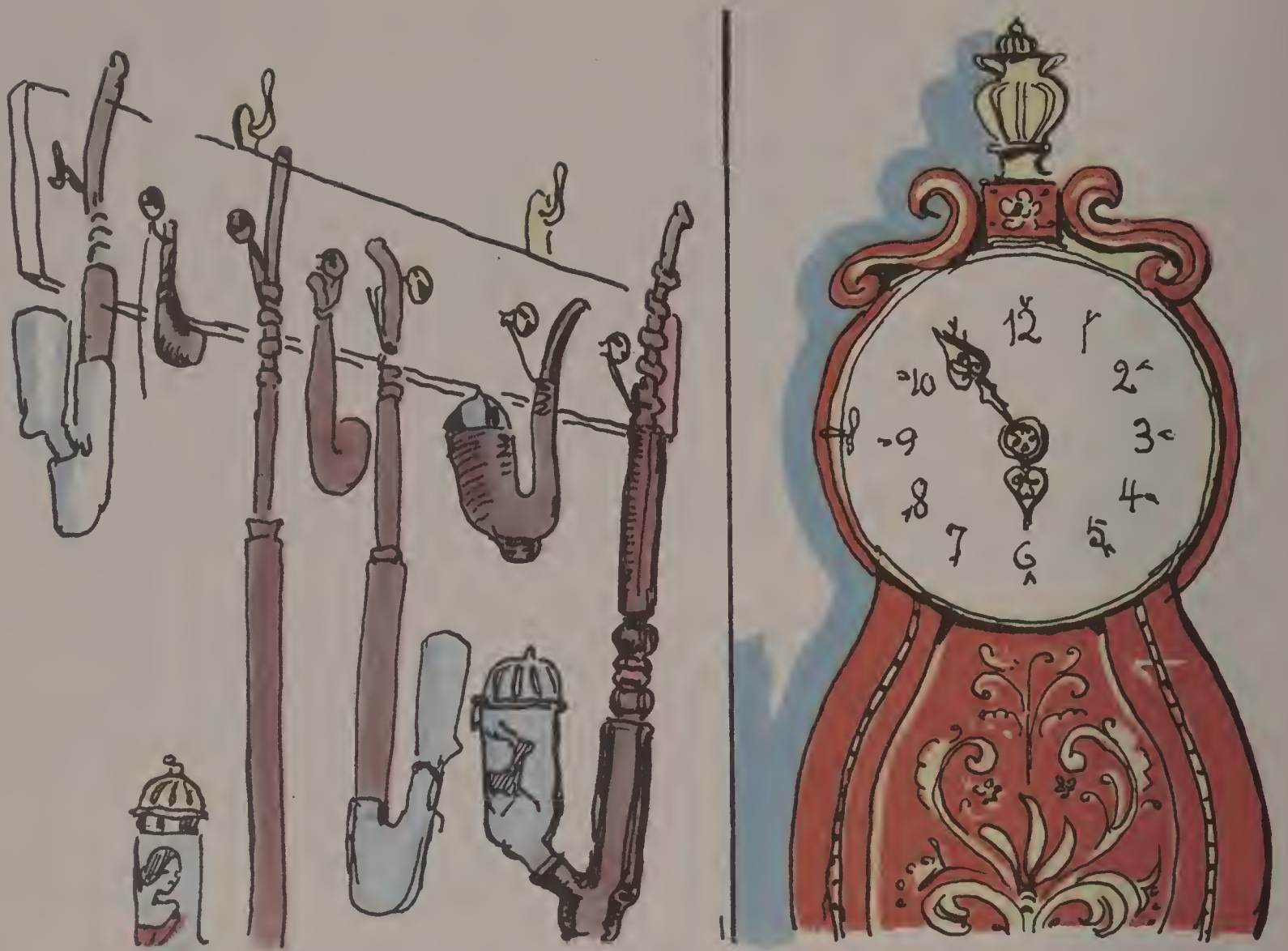
After quite some time of listening, they started raining questions down upon him, and he answered every one.

“Do you like The Golden Match for a name, Father?” asked Ollie. “Do you like it very much?”

“Very much indeed.”

“Father, must we really give up our playroom, Ollie and I?” Tillia’s throat felt tight.

“I believe so. That is, if you want to step into this pancake venture in earnest.”



“Auntie says it is an adventurous idea,” Bo put in wisely. “Do you think so too? I mean, do you think you can have a vacation from it next summer?”

“That depends,” smiled Mr. Jonsson, “that depends upon coffee and pancakes.”

“May Mother go to Stockholm, and may we surprise her with the inn?”

“Of course, of course.”

“Grandma says that she will be the cook. But may I flop the pancakes round for her, in the pan?” Ollie hastened to reserve first rights.

But even before Mr. Jonsson could refer him to Grandma in person, Tillia begged his advice in the matter of a signboard. “Please, Father, will you help us paint an enormous golden match? We do need a signboard for our house, you see. We could paint a cup of coffee on it and a pancake-tower!”

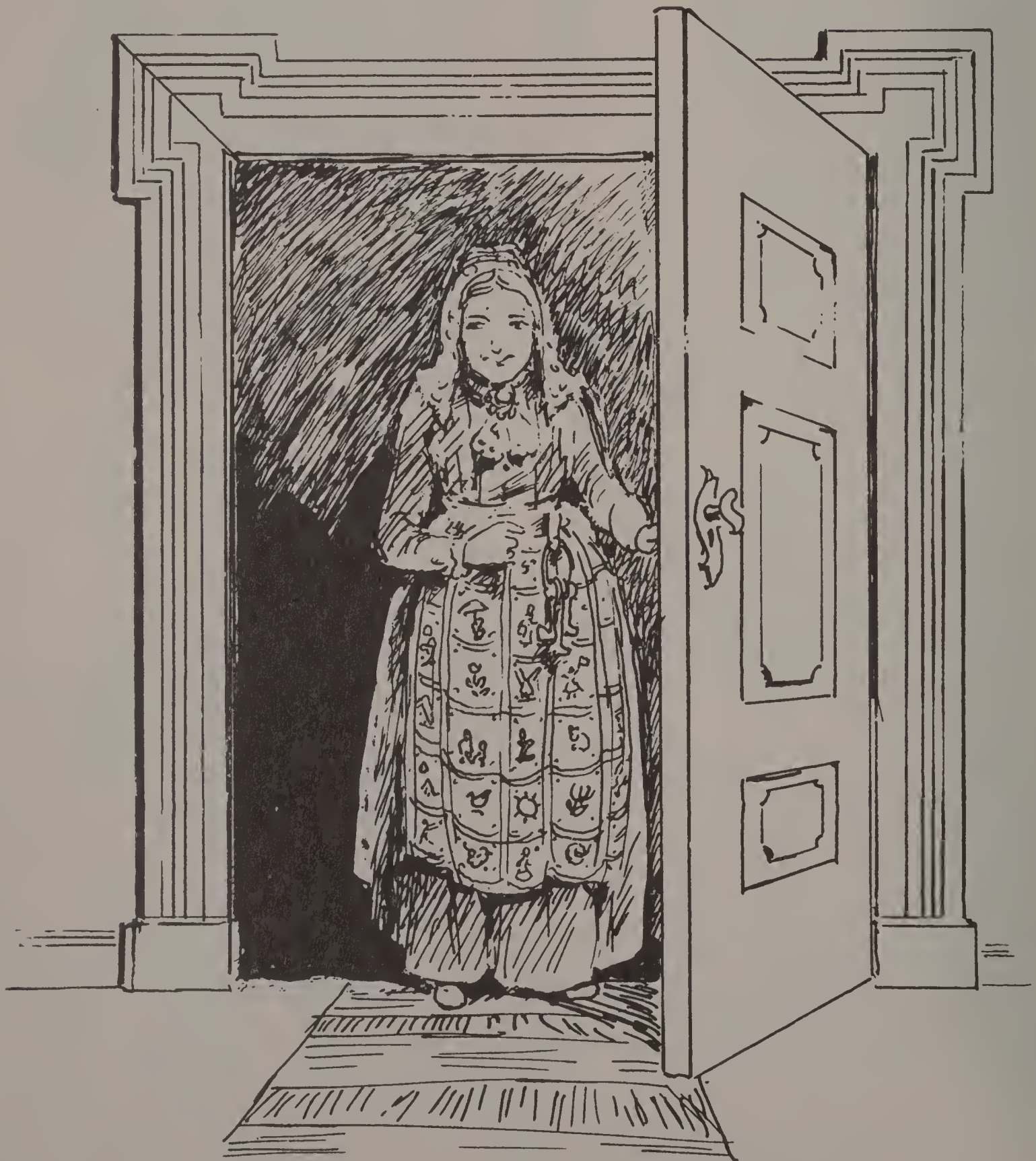


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"Please, Father, will you help us paint an enormous golden match?"

“Supper is ready,” sounded Grandma’s voice, “supper is ready.”

Mr. Jonsson rose from his chair. “I shall be glad to help you in my spare time,” he said. “Very glad. A-hem. Extraordinary. And I should like to paint the signboard for you. I shall allow this signboard to dangle in front of my house. But you must not expect much more of your old father. For remember, he is a matchmaker, and not a pancake baker.”





BUGS ON THE BUSHES BUYS PAINT

ON a sunny afternoon two days later, Mrs. Jonsson flew northward to Stockholm. She travelled in a red and yellow airplane, together with Aunt Greta Marie and Bo Peter Henning Persson.

Forlornly, Ollie and Tillia lingered behind the fence of the vast airport. They craned their necks and they raised themselves on tip-toes. And they waved and waved their hands after the roaring, soaring flying machine against the sky. At last they thought it useless to wave any longer. A strange emptiness filled their hearts.

“Gone,” said Ollie and tried to look as if he did not mind.

“Gone,” said Tillia and tried a brave little smile. For once she did not feel a bit like singing.

They turned about on their heels and almost stumbled over the boots that belonged to Bugs on the Bushes.

“Quite forgot that old Bugs was standing here, now did you not?” He shook a threatening finger. “But it is all right. I know what parting stands for. It stands for something sad. But you should not worry,” he rambled on. “You have much on your brains these days, what with establishing that pancake inn. Wasn’t it a treat for your mother to be invited for an airplane ride. Yes, yes, your aunt is a real lady and the checkered young gentleman a true cavalier.”

“Bo is not checkered,” said Ollie in a hurt voice. “It’s only his suit that’s checkered. He has a blue suit too, and that one isn’t checkered.”

Of a sudden Tillia had to laugh. “It’s the one he spilled the gravy on!”

“Did he?” mumbled Bugs. He scarcely could believe it of the young gentleman.

By this time the horsecart that had brought them to the airport, had been reached. “Climb up,” called Bugs, “up on the seat, both of you.”

And so the three rode back into the town, bumpety-bumpety-bump.

In front of a two-story house Bugs stopped his horse. He stepped into the back of the cart and selected two bunches of flowers from a tub. One bunch was asters and the other chrysanthemums.

“Kindly keep the reins, while I leave these.” Bugs slid on to the pavement. “I have delivered flowers to the old lady in this house every Thursday afternoon for seven years,” he proudly explained. “It’s like delivering meat or groceries. Ha-ha-ha—a pound of chrysanthemums and half a pound of asters. Well, I’ll hustle.”

With a final nod Bugs disappeared through the dark entrance door. The twins snuggled closer together, and they gripped the reins tighter. Tillia’s left fist held the one end, and Ollie’s right fist held the other. They both gazed fixedly at the horse’s pointed ears.



Hedvig Collin

"Quite forgot that old Bugs was standing here"

“Bugs will let us have thirteen tables out of his attic,” said Tillia, “for the pancake inn. He told me.”

“Enough chairs too?” Ollie was on his guard.

“Of course. He will let us have two chairs with each table. That makes—that makes thirty-six chairs. And he will give us more to store away in the basement, for unexpected crowds, he says.”

“Twice thirteen is twenty-six, not thirty-six,” corrected Ollie.

“All right, twenty-six then. It’s a lot of chairs anyway.”

“Why will he give us thirteen tables? Why not twelve?” Ollie thought it very queer.

Tillia puckered her forehead. “He said that twelve is only a dozen, but that thirteen is a lucky number. I do not know exactly why.”

“I don’t either.” They both were troubled.

“I hear something. Listen!” Tillia pricked up her ears, and so did Ollie and the horse.

Dull, scraping sounds came nearer and nearer. And finally an old, old man showed up at the corner. An odd instrument hung by a strap around his neck. The twins began to wriggle on their seats, and the horse thumped the cobbles with his hoof. Neither of them dared move any farther, but each wished that Bugs would appear, and appear quickly.

“What is he playing on?” whispered Ollie.

“I do not know,” said Tillia. “It looks like a fiddle, but it isn’t one. It sounds, oh, it sounds miserable, Ollie! I think I must hold my ears!”

“Please don’t,” begged the less musical Ollie. “He is watching us, see? He is going to talk to us!”

Their fists closed still tighter over the reins.

“How do you do, children,” muttered the old, old man in an old, old voice. He stopped by the cart. “Fine weather for music, isn’t it?” He kept playing away busily with his scraping bow, “waiting for somebody?”

“U—huh,” nodded the twins, “for Bugs on the Bushes. What are you playing on, please?”

“I am playing on my key harp. What did you say you are waiting for?”

“For Bugs on the Bushes,” repeated Ollie and Tillia, and then they cried, “there he comes!”

Bugs hastened his steps. “Have you collected company?” he grinned, a little uneasy. “Excuse my delay, if you please. I just sipped a cup of coffee with the lady.” He slipped a copper coin into the old man’s bulging coat pocket.

“Thank you, thank you, sir!” With his bow he pointed at the children. “They never saw a key harp before.” He snickered. “They asked me what I was playing on!”

So the old man together with Bugs explained whatever they knew of the ancient instrument. “It is made of hollowed pine, pretty much like a fiddle. See? It has many strings. And these here are the keys that must be pressed. And when the bow slides over the strings, the music is made. See? Fine to dance after, around the Maypole, on midsummer’s eve.”

“That’s all,” finished Bugs, as he climbed up on the cart and drove off.

“Thank you, sir, thank you,” the old, old man called after them, in his old, old voice.

“And now we are going to buy paint,” announced Bugs.

“Paint?”

“Yes, paint.” Bugs seemed to enjoy himself hugely.

“What for?”

“For thirteen little tables and for twice as many chairs,” chuckled the gardener. “They need new dresses.”

“Oh, Bugs!” cried Ollie and Tillia, delighted. “We know! May we help you paint them?”

“Upon my word, you may not,” teased Bugs. “You must!”

The twins laughed aloud.

“You would not expect me to do the whole business myself, would you?” he grumbled. “By the way, what color do you want for your pancake inn furniture?”

“Oh, any color.” Neither Ollie nor Tillia had thought about this.

“What? Any color!” snorted Bugs. “Any color is no color. We can’t paint anything any color. Black, white, red, green, blue, yellow—those are honest colors.”

The twins glanced sideways at their old friend. Had they made him cross? But no, his eyes twinkled. It was only in fun that he had snorted so.

“What color have the tables and the chairs now?” Ollie ventured carefully.

“This is what I call a sensible question.” Bugs beamed his sunniest smile. “Blue they are. Swedish flag-blue. So if you could come down to blue, one flimsy coat of paint might be enough. Besides, blue and gold is a fine match, I dare say.”

“Should we not ask Grandma or Father first?” asked Tillia.

“I spoke to your Grandma,” replied Bugs calmly. “She said that blue would be lovely, but that it was up to you to decide. She told me how you two had sacrificed your big playroom. And she thought it mighty fine of you. ‘The whole idea of working for a vacation is theirs,’ your Grandma said, ‘and the room is theirs and really, the whole pancake inn will be theirs. We others are just helping to make the wheel spin round.’ And her eyes glimmered and sparkled with— with light.” Bugs passed a hand over his forehead, for he had almost made a mistake and said “with tears.”

“Of all the stars in heaven,” he exclaimed. For there was Tillia, swallowing and sobbing as if the world was an ocean of sadness!

“Naw! Naw!” cried Bugs in dismay, and with his clumsy paw he stroked the girl’s hand. “What, Ollie too? Whatever has come over the two of you?”



"Naw! Naw!" cried Bugs in dismay

“He cries,” sputtered Tillia, “ ’cause Bo’s gone away, with his tricks, and mother too—oo—oo.”

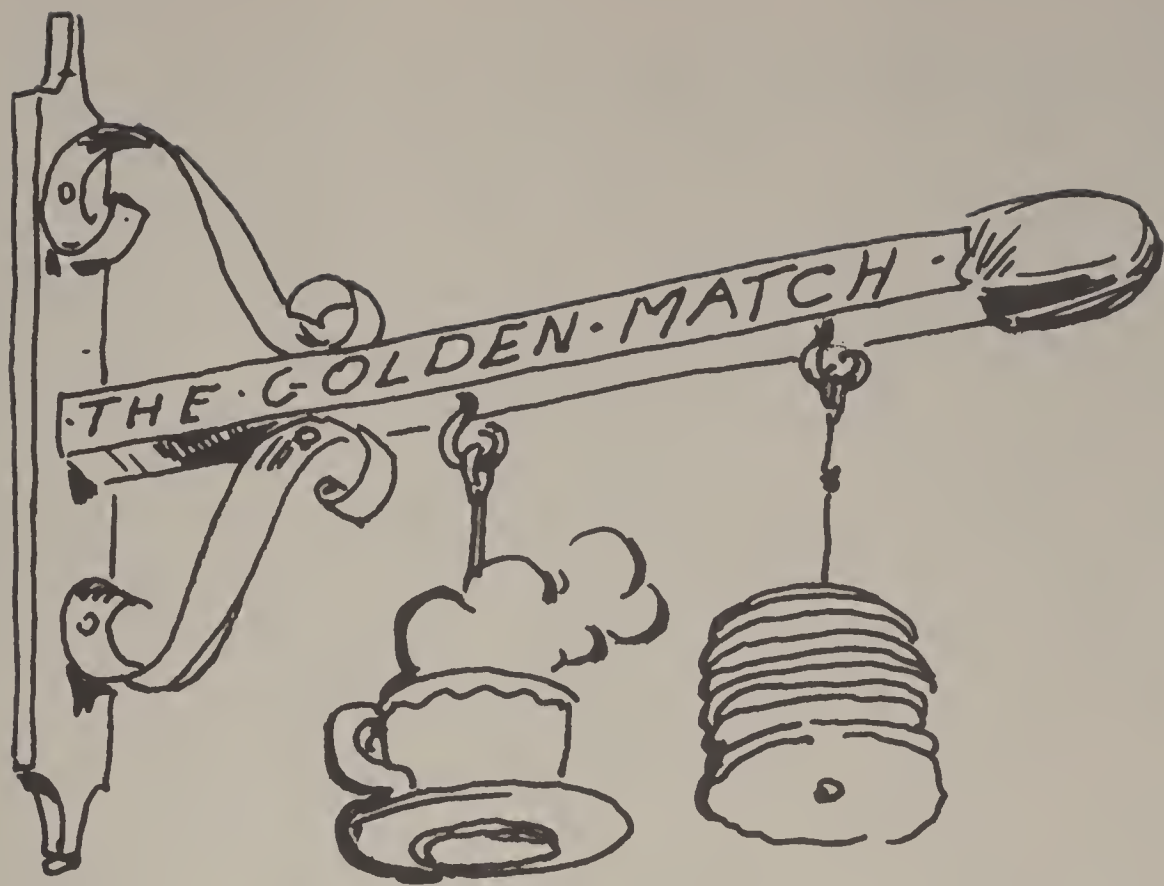
“And she cries,” quivered Ollie, “ ’cause Aunt Greta Marie’s gone, and they can’t sing any mo—o—o—ore.”

Poor Bugs was at his wits’ end. He almost drove past the paint and varnish store. A very sudden “Whoa!” made the horse stand still. This made the twins return to common sense.

“We are sorry, Bugs,” they said. “Excuse us, please. We won’t do it again.”

“That is much better,” cried Bugs, and a stone fell off his chest. “Climb down, my dears, and we shall buy a gallon of blue paint and three little thin brushes and three big fat brushes.”





PETTER HAS THE MEASLES

A WEEK had passed. Every day in the afternoon, the twins painted chairs and tables blue. They also painted little wooden flagposts golden. Thirteen golden flagpoles to stand on thirteen blue tables. And Grandma had bought thirteen silken Swedish flags.

Every night after supper Mr. Jonsson busied himself in his special corner. First he designed, and then he colored the signboard. It was a proud piece of work, this signboard in the shape of a huge match. A brown and yellow painted pancake-tower, ten pancakes high, hung by a chain from the head of the golden match. A steaming cup of coffee hung from the other end.

Bugs on the Bushes had made a gift of two dozen pots and tubs with flowers and ferns. And he had fastened a giant of a mirror on the wall opposite the door. So now Ollie's and Tillia's former play-room looked twice as bright and large as it had ever been.

When Petter, the young matchmaker, caught wind of the pancake inn plan, he appeared with a tiny glass showcase. It had a tricky sliding door. "Just a small gift," he had called it.

And so arrived the day before the day before the day before Grand Opening Day on Sunday. And with it something nobody would have dreamed of happened: Petter caught the measles!

He had caught them he knew not where, but he was very sure he had them. Yes indeed, it could be nothing else, what with the sniffles that could not be turned off, and a skin that ached and burned and prickled.

But there were four good reasons that made it especially bad for Petter to lie in a dark room and be ill. First: Petter had hardly known a sick day in his life, and so he worried about dying from the measles. Second: His friend Ollie was not allowed to visit with him and chase the gloom away. Third: Grand Opening Day of the pancake inn was just around the corner, and he would be lying in bed. And fourth—the very worst: He had to stay away from the match factory! Who, who in all the world was there to fill his place?

"No one," he groaned. "There is no general like me," and tears as big as peas rolled down the poor boy's cheeks.

But of a sudden an idea sprang up in his mind. "Ollie! Ollie knows almost as much about my work as I do myself, so much I talked to him about it!" Quickly Petter dried his tears and called for his mother.

When he had explained his plan to her, he begged: "Please, Mother dear, walk over to the Jonssons and speak to them about it. It will make me feel much better, and maybe I won't die then."

The little lady, who was his mother, sighed. "You must not say



Petter appeared with a tiny glass showcase

such things. Promise to rest meanwhile, and I shall do as you wish.”

So she put on her wrap and her bonnet and scurried down Long Street.

Grandma Jonsson was very surprised when she saw Petter’s mother in the doorway. “Do come in,” she invited her, “and I shall pour us some coffee. It is simmering on the stove.”

“I am a bit rushed,” replied the little lady. “But I’ll be happy to accept a cup of coffee, thank you. It does a body good. You see, it is about Petter I came. He sent me.”

“Petter!” exclaimed Grandma Jonsson alarmed. “I hope nothing serious has happened?”

Just then Ollie entered the room. He said a polite how-do-you-do to the visitor and sat down at the very edge of the couch.

“He is ill, my boy. What do you say to that, Ollie? The measles he has caught!”

“The measles!” Ollie and Grandma called out.

“A big boy of his age having the measles?” Grandma shook and shook her head. “Are you sure?”

“Oh, yes. No doubt. And it is bad, because Petter has outgrown his baby shoes. The older you are the harder the measles are on you.” She shrugged her frail shoulders.

“He is a strong boy. He will be over it fast.” Grandma gave her a hopeful smile.

“I wish Bo were here,” whispered Ollie, excited. “He knows all about the measles.”

The little lady bent very low over her coffee cup. Back and forth and round and round she stirred in it with her silver spoon. “Petter is worried,” she faltered. “He cannot be on duty in the factory, and he wondered—he wants me to find out, if Ollie—if Ollie would work in his place these days? It is asking much, I know.”

“Asking much?” thought Ollie, and his heart skipped a beat. “It’s wonderful! Nothing could be more wonderful.”

He was ready to bounce off head over heels. "I am going," he announced. "I can't wait. Thank you, and tell Petter I thank him, please. Good-bye."

"Not so fast, young man," and Grandma snatched him by his coattail. "Let's think first. Why don't we telephone your father?" She passed a hand over her forehead. "Yes, I should think that wisest."

"But Grr—rrrandma!" Ollie objected earnestly. "I know the Chief. Petter showed him to me once. I must see him in his office. Please let me go and talk to him." Ollie felt very businesslike.

Petter's mother gave him a friendly nod. "Thank you, Ollie," she said simply. "You are a good friend. I shall tell Petter. And now I must hustle and not keep him worrying any more." Whereupon she shook hands with the Jonssons, said thank-you-good-bye, and left.

"My hands are clean and my face is too. I'll just have to leave now," pleaded Ollie. "I shall be back for luncheon, or for supper maybe. Farewell."

Her small grandson seemed so grown-up of a sudden! Grandma could not take her eyes off him. "All right, dear," she said at last. "I hope all will be well with you. Remember to be very courteous to people you meet. Comb your hair before you enter the office, and wipe your feet on the mat, and shake the dust from your shoes. Don't talk unless you are asked a question. And if someone does speak to you, be sure to look him squarely into the eyes. Watch out for your clothes, and keep your hands out of your pockets." Then Grandma Jonsson caught her breath.

Ollie stood with lips wide apart. This was the longest speech he had ever heard her make. He waved a final, swift good-bye to her and disappeared.

Not much more than an hour later, the telephone rang out in the hall, and Grandma answered it. "Oh, yes, Ollie! I am so glad for you. As a general in Petter's place? How much did you say you

were earning? Well, well! For a whole week? Good thing that your father is pleased. You won't be home until tonight. All right. Thank you for calling, big boy. I am proud of you."

Grandma Jonsson hung up the receiver. Slowly she walked over to the old pearwood chair, by the window. And then she sat very still for awhile. "Little Ollie quite grown up," her thoughts trailed wistfully. "I must bake a cake and cook a nice supper, for tonight. Tillia must help me. She knows what Ollie likes best—the merry little matchmaker! But I wonder where she is?"





GRAND OPENING DAY

AND so at last the Sunday arrived that was to be different from any other Sunday the Jonssons had known: Grand Opening Day of The Golden Match Pancake Inn!

The house was clad in holiday garb from the flagpole to the kitchen. Everywhere it gleamed and glittered and sparkled. Anna and Nanna, the two help-madames, were assisting Grandma in the kitchen. Bugs on the Bushes was waiting on tables. And if Petter had not had the measles, he would have done the honors at the door. Now Bo did them instead. He had returned from Stockholm the

night before, together with Mrs. Jonsson and Aunt Greta Marie.

Early in the morning he had started bowing. "How do you do, ladies and gentlemen, how do you do. And how do you do again." Late in the afternoon he still was bowing, and he still enjoyed his task.

The air was filled with the rarest fragrance. First it smelled of pancakes, and then of coffee, and then of stewed mushrooms, and of apples, and of plums, and cherries, and of a hundred kinds of berries.

Dressed in holiday costumes, Ollie and Tillia felt as if they were living in fairyland. Ever since breakfast they had been tasting pancakes, as many as they wished. And when they were not tasting pancakes, they were bowing and curtsying and shaking hands.

"Hm—m," said a plump, rosy-cheeked pancake-eating lady to Tillia, "this idea is delightful. Whoever would have thought it of the Jonssons. Hm—m—m! I shall return gladly and often."

"Thank you, madam," curtsied Tillia. "Would you care to help yourself to one of our doll-size boxes of matches? There are thirteen boxes among them that have a golden match inside. It is a Grand Opening Day special. If you should draw such a one, we'll serve you a pancake-tower free, next Sunday. It's been my brother's plan from the start."

"How very wise a plan," exclaimed the lady, as she eyed the basket on the table suspiciously. "Let me see, which box should I take? This one? Or this one? I really do not know. Well, I'll venture this one." And behold, she had ventured right. A tiny gold-colored match stared at her from the top layer of the now open box.

"Such luck!" she cried, delighted. "More luck than I have ever had before. Good-bye until next Sunday." And out she rustled.

"Please, sir," said Ollie to a thin, pale gentleman who was ready to leave, "would you mind writing your name on this tablecloth, with this pencil?"

"Gladly," smiled the thin, pale gentleman. "What is the thought behind it?"

“It is going to be our merry guest book,” Ollie explained. “My sister will embroider your name and all the others, afterwards. It’s been my sister’s plan from the start.”

“A neat little plan indeed,” exclaimed the thin, pale gentleman, as he carefully pencilled his name.

And so the hours of this Grand Opening Day passed pleasantly for everyone.

Ollie felt sprightly and important, and much of the time he walked about sticking out his chest. “I am a general,” his whole person seemed to breathe, “a general like Petter. And I am glad.” To be sure, Petter’s measles would depart one of these days. But Ollie pushed such worries far away. Something might happen—without hurting Petter—to have the measles stay on awhile longer yet. Right now he himself was the youngest matchmaker, he, Ollie Jonsson!

And Tillia? For the most part she tried to sing away merrily, because she felt sad. Aunt Greta Marie would leave tomorrow and be gone forever—yes, forever. She would return to Stockholm and give singing lessons to everyone, except to herself. Tillia thought she could not bear it. A heavy lump rose in her throat.

Unseeingly, she gazed at the signboard of The Golden Match. “If I were rich,” she mused, “I would live in Stockholm with Auntie. I would become a choirgirl first and a Swedish nightingale next. And I—”

Of a sudden Tillia’s daydream was torn into shreds. For her eyes beheld a real and surprising thing. Nearer and nearer it moved. Marching up the street it came—in the shape of boys and girls dressed festively.

As they approached The Golden Match, one after the other stopped and went inside. Tillia hastily withdrew.

A minute later, Bo announced to his astonished family the arrival of the Sons and Daughters of the Matchmakers. His voice quivered, his ears blushed and his hair stood up on end.

“But Bo!” exclaimed Aunt Greta Marie and the Jonssons. “Has anything gone wrong?”

“Not yet. But they are Petter’s doing,” stammered Bo, “not mine. He left word for me to—to take them over from him. If they do well, they’ll be the Golden Match Dancers from now on. Petter left word. But if they spoil their chances, Petter—well—he will put the blame on me!” Bo ran a shaking hand through his red hair. “It’s very upsetting to me, very.”

It sounded odd indeed.

“Do calm yourself, son. I never saw you like this before.” Aunt Greta Marie gave him a soothing pat. “It will be great to watch the fun, I know. Don’t they look lovely! We will go in right now.”

Bo need not have worried for Petter’s sake! For as it happened, the Sons and Daughters of the Matchmakers proved to be the grand event of Grand Opening Day.

On the cleared floor of the living room danced twelve boys and girls, and the fiddler was the thirteenth. Aunt Greta Marie and Tillia joined in the singing of Swedish folk songs after awhile, and no one could have had a cozier time. All the music and the gayety of their hearts was brought to life.

People came and people went. Pancake-eating, coffee-drinking people they were, who watched the dancers with shining eyes and who promised to return. They could not help but stop at The Golden Match. It was impossible to pass by.

Little boys came in and bowed, “We have been very, very good. Our fathers let us buy a pancake-tower for a treat.”

Little girls came in and curtsied, “We have been fine little helpers at home. Our mothers sent us to eat as many pancakes as we please.”

Indeed it looked well and rosy for the inn of The Golden Match! Every bit of doubt about it was blown to the four winds.



OLLIE AND TILLIA TAKE THEIR SHARES

THE hour for bedtime was set late that night. And when it finally arrived, it was set later yet.

“Good night,” said the twins looking very wide-awake, “good night.” They each shook hands with the family.

But here stood Aunt Greta Marie and Mrs. Jonsson, who would not let go of Tillia’s hand. And there stood Bo and Mr. Jonsson, who would not let go of Ollie’s hand.

Grandma smiled, and her eyes roamed over the group. And then, in a most mysterious manner, she pulled two sealed envelopes from her embroidered apron pocket. She gave them to each twin and said: "Your share in the pancake inn venture."

Like two enormous question marks, Ollie and Tillia stared at the small neat envelopes in their hands.

"Open them," urged Bo. "They won't bite you." He almost sounded impatient.

So hasty fingers were put to fumbling and to tearing, and of a sudden they held two crisp new paper notes of fifty crowns (Swedish money) each, between them.

"Mother!!" cried Tillia.

"Father!!" cried Ollie.

"A—hem." Mr. Jonsson cleared his throat. "Extraordinary. You should be the one to explain, Grandma. After all, without you this would not have been possible."

"Wouldn't it?" twinkled Grandma. She was pleased to hear it at the end of the day, for she had worked hard and needed encouragement. "I will not keep you wondering much longer." She nodded at the twins. "You see, we each are having a share in the earnings of our Golden Match. These bills mark the beginning of your very own shares, and you may use them as you see fit."

"Oh, Grr—rrandma! Thank you. Thank you," cried two high, excited voices, "you, and everybody else too!"

"What are you going to do with it?" Bo asked Tillia curiously.

"Spend it," she curtsied playfully, "just as soon as I know on what." Her cheeks glowed, and her eyes danced.

"And you, Ollie?"

"Save it," he replied with happy calm.

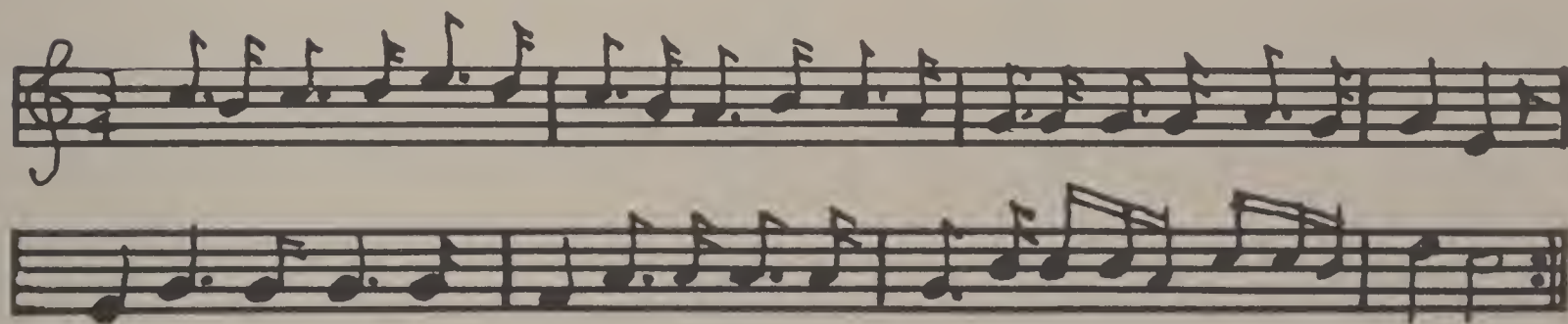
"How would you both feel about spending part of your fortune on an excursion by boat, to Stockholm?" Aunt Greta Marie proposed joyously. "We old folks talked it over this afternoon, and we decided

not to say no, if you say yes! You might call it an invitation from two Perssons to two Jonssons. And you may stay until Christmas, if you like. I must be home on Wednesday, when my Young Girls' Choir starts again."

She paused to fix her great blue eyes especially on Tillia. "You just must have a try in my choir, my Swedish nightingale. I want to find out what you can do. I am giving you a chance, that's all. But you will make the most of it, I know. Will you come with me, Tillia?"

"Oh, will I, Aunt Greta Marie!" cried Tillia, a-tremble with joy. "Whatever makes you know so much about other people's wishes? Nothing in all the world do I want more than to become a great singer, like you." And she threw back her head and sang and trilled with all her heart:

"When the wind was blowing,
I went out a-rowing
In a little open boat;
Over to left,
And over to right,
And up and down,
And down and up
Went she—"



But what was the matter with Ollie? There he sat huddled up in a corner, and was as quiet as a stone.

"You would not mind spending part of your crowns and coming



"Oh, will I, Aunt Greta Marie!" cried Tillia

with us, now, would you, Ollie?" Aunt Greta Marie bent over him, alarmed at his stoniness.

"I want to stay at home."

"Why? Why? Why?" was showered down upon him.

"I want to," he repeated.

"I can show you many tricks in Stockholm," coaxed Bo.

"The trip will do you good, dear," encouraged Grandma and Mrs. Jonsson.

"I think I know what's on his mind," said Mr. Jonsson. "I think that he is worried over his job at the match factory, with Petter absent. Is that it, son?"

Ollie's face cleared up like sunshine breaking through the clouds. He gave his father an eager, thankful smile and a nod of the head.

"I shall find someone else, Ollie. No need for you to skip a rare vacation," Mr. Jonsson told him. "Of course, you have done very well. In fact, you have worked better than anyone I could imagine at this moment. Extraordinary. But Petter will be back on duty soon. Meanwhile you take this trip and enjoy yourself."

"No." Ollie shook his head. He shook it very firmly. "May I please be a general first? I will save my crowns and spend them later."

The others regarded him with a mixture of pride and sadness. "Too bad to let this chance slip by," their faces said. "But his decision is a strong and worthy one. We like him for it."

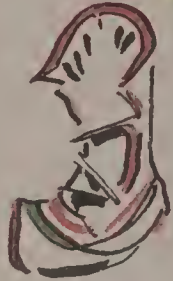
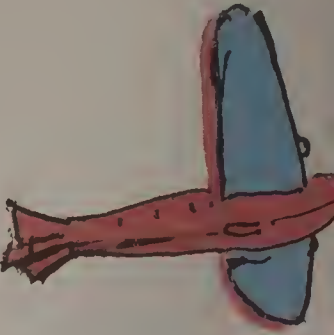
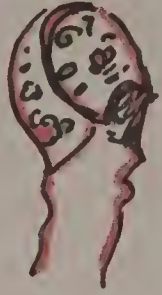
"We men have our troubles to see things through, Ollie!" Mr. Jonsson spoke, much moved. "But your day will come, son, and then you will be truly thankful."

"Shake hands, General Ollie." Gallantly Bo clicked his heels together. "You are a fine fellow, believe it or not."

"Ding—dong—" and the clock struck midnight.

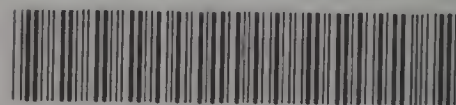
"Good-night, General Ollie," rang through the house. "Good-night, Swedish nightingale."

Then all was still.





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